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SUSAN ABRAMS

THE VIETNAM BABYLIFT

JOSEPH H. FICHTER CATHOLICS AND TEMPERANCE
FRANK GETLEIN THE AMERICAN DISEASE
LOIS SPEAR AFTER THE SHOUTING
ABIGAIL McCARTHY A CATHOLIC PROBLEM? MAYBE
PETER STEINFELS SECOND THOUGHTS ON SEX

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MARK TAYLOR MODERN TRAGEDIES
REVIEWS: RICHARD C. HOTTELET, MICHAEL ZEIK

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NEWS & VIEWS

Father Computer

Current Contents, weekly publication of the Institute for Scientific Information in Philadelphia, and winner of the first Information Industry Association Hall of Fame Award, offers the following in its social and behavioral sciences edition for Aug. 16:

CONFESS:
A Computer Program

K. Majer et al. (Indiana Univ.) in *AV Communication Review*) from *Worm Runner's Digest*) 22:63-7, Spring 74 (pd 3347a)

. . . "Recent Vatican interest in the effect upon laymen of the shortage of professional priests (PP) and the decreased seminary enrollment of potential priests (PP) has led to the development of Computerized Operations (Nonretrievable) for Expediting Sinner Services (CONFESS). This program provides a viable alternative to traditional confession procedures by listing penance requirements (by sin) on a private printout to confessees appropriate to the sin committed. This eliminates one problem which frequently occurs where the confessee, because he is under extreme duress, may forget the original penance. In addition, the program provides a probability estimate of the consequence of not completing the penance associated with the given sin; for example, number of years in purgatory. Thus, full freedom of choice is given to the participant/user (PU)." The authors note that in a study "to determine the reliability of the CONFESS program," the average wait for a CONFESS box was only 1.72 minutes, as compared to 7.12 minutes wait for a confessional booth with a PP. The authors describe the PU procedures in steps:

"Step 1: Enter the CONFESS box, and kneel on the cushioned kneeler in front of the typewriter/console. Type in your personal PU identification code.

Step 2: The typewriter will type your name and the elapsed time since your last CONFESS *session* (CONFESSION). Following the request for personal sins. type in all sins since your last CONFESSION.

Step 3: Press the 'enter' button and silently repeat the short form of the Act of Contrition. (Given the average latency for GPA [graduated penance accrual], 6.1 seconds, this is usually reduced to 'I'm sorry.')

Step 4: Removes the CONFESS personalized GPA printout."

* * *

The Institute for Scientific Information states that it "makes a reasonable effort to supply complete and accurate information in its information services, but does not assume any liability for errors or omissions." . . . Or, I presume, for put-on input either.

Not So Silent, Indeed

A Religious News Service story provides an interesting footnote to Peter Hebblethwaite's article in the Sept. 10 *Commonweal* pointing out that Eastern European journalists are not so conforming as is usually thought, and that they do possess a surprising measure of professional initiative.

The RNS story told of the upsetting of new anti-religious legislation in Yugoslavia, when a Zagreb journalist assigned to Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, filed an "unauthorized report" of discussion of the legislation in the local parliament.

The unanticipated publicity brought the legislation to a halt, in the wake of protests from religious groups that the laws were discriminatory and violated the fundamental rights of believers. The Communist regime had planned to keep the new legislation "under wraps" until it was adopted and implemented in each of the Yugoslav republics.

The legislation was aimed chiefly at Muslims, because of their higher birth rate and success in attracting youths from other religious bodies.

Catholic leaders joined in the protest, including Archbishop Franjo Kuharic of Zagreb. The government apparently thought that Christian leaders—Roman Catholic and Orthodox—could be brought into "dialogue and compromise" under the new laws. However, Christian officials objected to the fact that they were not consulted. They were also said to be aware that, though the new legislation was not aimed at them, it could be applied to them at government whim.

Odds and Ends

—*Burroughs Clearing House,* a monthly for bankers, features in its August issue the latest in religious gimmickry: Heirloom Bibles for the building of checking and savings accounts. "Heirloom Bibles helped us increase our deposits over 50%!" testifies Highland Park State Bank of San Antonio. ". . . We can provide quality Family Bibles for less than $10 to our depositors. Everything's right in the program: Free promotional material, colorful lobby displays, ad mats, glossy prints, brochures, even radio and TV scripts. Heirloom Bibles really work for us." . . . Don't be nervous; the Heirloom Bible is available in both Protestant and Catholic editions.

—Jean Dixon, seer: Five months ago she predicted Ronald Regan would get the Republican presidential nomination; Gerald Ford would be wounded in an assassination attempt during July! Ford would resign; Hubert Humphrey and Jimmy Carter would battle to the wire for the Democratic nomination; Carter would get it. That's one right out of five. . . .

So do you still wanna know who's she picking for victory on Nov. 2? Carter.

JOHN DEEDY

Occasionally a poem seems specially made for the News & Views page. This is one such. Georg Gaston is in the Department of English at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C. Mr. Gaston says he hopes William Blake will forgive him.

SHEEP

Jimmy, who has made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee teeth and bid thee grin,
Till the votes come in, to win;
Gave thee such a subtle voice,
Making all the land rejoice;
Gave thee Agnew, Nixon, Ford,
Plus a line straight to the Lord.
Jimmy, who has made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Jimmy, I will tell thee,
Jimmy, I will tell thee!
He is meek and he is mild,
He is but a simple child.
In the evening long he'll stare
At a box full unaware
That a nation full of sheep,
In plain language, is a heep.
Little lambs, God save thee!
Dost thou know who leads thee?

GEORG GASTON

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CORRESPONDENCE

Dogs and Donuts

Garrett Park, Md.

To the Editors: While it is clearly not of great importance, Mr. Getlein's knowledge of colloquial German is somewhat deficient. In his column of August 13 he translates Pres. Kennedy's remark "Ich bin ein Berliner," as meaning "I am a Hot Dog." Had the sentence been, "Ich bin ein Frankfurter," that would be true, but should Mr. Getlein go to a store or restaurant in Germany and ask for a "Berliner," expecting a Hot Dog, he might be surprised to be served a Jelly Donut, for that is what a Berliner is colloquially. It might now be a quick exercise for Mr. Getlein to rewrite the remainder of the paragraph and his play on the word Hot Dog, to see how it works with a Jelly Donut.

This may be considered carping criticism, but in truth, it is amusement, at a small slip in a series of otherwise superior columns. J. M. GURIAN

Credit Due

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: I am grateful for the competent professionalism of George Alford's review of *Catholic Schools in a Declining Church* [June 18], and for the complimentary remarks he made about the volume and about other NORC work. However, at the risk of persuading the *Commonweal* editor that I am never satisfied, I would like to register a moderately strong protest against the omission of the names of my two lay colleagues from the body of the review. They are not research assistants but established scholars with publications of their own. They put at least as much work into *Catholic Schools in a Declining Church* as I did, and merit at least as much credit for the good things in the book and criticism for the bad, as I do. In particular, the chapter on reasons for attending Catholic schools and the chapter on

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CARTER AND THE BISHOPS

The confrontation between Jimmy Carter and the Catholic bishops on the abortion issue is dangerous for both sides. For Carter the perils are clear. Catholics constitute almost one out of four in the population. In areas like the Northeast, they add up to more than one-third of the voters in urban centers crucial for Carter in November. Although more Catholics vote Democratic than Republican, they are not unshakable. In general, as Andrew Greeley and others have pointed out, Catholics tend to be more "liberal" than the rest of the population except Jews, especially on economic and racial issues. Catholics thus stand somewhat on the left of the American political spectrum and are an important part of any liberal coalition. But as they mount the economic ladder and move out to the suburbs, they may be less and less inevitably Democratic (especially if non-Catholic liberals seem to treat them with some contempt as "hard-hat ethnics"), and this would be especially true if Catholics got the impression that Carter was in any way slighting their views. Some, like Father Greeley, are already convinced that Catholics are being ignored by Carter strategists. Thus while Jimmy Carter may not be able to share the convictions of the Catholic bishops on abortion—or, rather, on the wisdom of a constitutional amendment, since he himself opposes abortion—he must handle the issue and Catholic leaders with great care. On this score it is a plus for Carter that he disavowed the Democratic platform plank which suggested that individuals were not free to work for a constitutional amendment if they so desired.

That much may be obvious. But the Catholic bishops should realize that there are also other if more subtle dangers in this situation. One danger is of arousing and strongly polarizing public opinion against Catholics on this and, by extension, other issues of importance to Catholics. (Would, incidentally, a constitutional ban on abortion be one whit more likely if

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Mr. Carter said he favored it?) Church leaders need not be overly timid about urging important Catholic views, but if they are identified in the public mind with narrow, one-issue sectarian pleading—as we think they are in this case—there could result a significant backlash against them and the entire Catholic community. The bishops apparently think they are in a strong position to change Carter's public posture because he is considered to be weak vis à vis Catholics. Two recent front-page headlines in the *New York Times* summarize the situation: "Abortion Stand by Carter Vexes Catholic Bishops" and a few days later, "Ford Hopes Linked to Catholic Vote." But do we really want history to record that Southern Baptist Carter was defeated by Roman Catholic votes? (If Senator Kennedy were the candidate rather than Carter, it is difficult to believe that the bishops would pursue the same tactics with him, although his position on abortion and a constitutional amendment is not very different from Mr. Carter's.) Rightly or wrongly, abortion tends to be seen as a "Catholic issue." No matter how strongly Catholics may feel about it, they have only to imagine the general public reaction, including that among Catholics, if Protestant leaders were having meetings with Carter in an effort to get him to come out for a constitutional amendment forbidding, say, the use of alcohol or the playing of bingo.

Another danger is that the bishops have again concentrated attention exclusively on abortion as "the" Catholic issue. In a statement entitled "Political Responsibility: Reflections on an Election Year" issued in February, the Administrative Board of the U.S. Catholic Conference reasserted the Church's obligation to speak out on public issues involving "human rights, social justice and the life of the Church in society," and urged voters to consider a broad range of issues which they called "central to the national debate." Because the issues were listed alphabetically, abortion came first, but the other issues included the economy, with particular reference to unemployment; education; food policy, at home and abroad; housing; human rights and foreign policy; mass media; military expenditures. Such issues were mentioned at the meeting with Mr. Carter but somewhere between February and the present the bishops seem to have decided to give short shrift to the rest of the alphabet in favor of major emphasis on A for abortion—a fact only underscored by their abortion-centered comments after meeting with President Ford.

Finally, there is what must be the ultimate political danger for the bishops: the election results might very well reveal that on issues like this they are generals without very many troops—a possibility that a substantial number of politicians have already begun to suspect. We would not want to be misunderstood on this point. The bishops are taken with the utmost seriousness by Catholics as successors of the apostles and moral teachers. It would be rash to view lightly their unanimous condemnation of abortion as a grave moral evil, and here we think Catholics in general do take the bishops very seriously. But when it comes to translating moral principles into public law, that is something else again, and on this the bishops do not necessarily speak for all Catholics or, in this case, even a majority, if the public opinion polls are accurate. One can in perfectly good conscience oppose abortion on moral grounds and yet think a constitutional amendment on the subject a bad idea—which indeed is Mr. Carter's position. If there is such a thing as a Catholic vote, on this issue at least we suspect it is highly fragmented: provided Carter does not seem in some way to be insulting the bishops, we are extremely dubious that they can in fact deliver it. And once this fact is known, how much influence will the bishops have on other public issues?

We make these points with considerable regret. The issue involved is not, we think, a simple one. The Church does have a right and a duty to speak on moral issues confronting society; of this we are completely convinced. But how should it be done in a pluralistic, democratic society like ours? In a situation such as this, a national pastoral council that was truly representative and that had organized scholarly input would be invaluable. One thing we are quite sure of: a simple episcopal fiat is not enough. The relationship between moral imperative and civil law is complex at best; on the abortion issue that complexity, we think, is being ignored by the bishops. Their political stance may help to persuade a few more people that they are indeed serious in their condemnation of abortion. No matter how we try, though, we cannot see that the course they are pursuing will in fact promote greater public respect for efforts to bring moral strictures to bear on politics.

WASHINGTON REPORT

THE AMERICAN DISEASE

For two hundred years or so, the English invariably referred to syphilis, gonorrhea, chankers and even crabs as "the French disease."

For the same two hundred years, the French invariably referred to the same group of pathological manifestations as "the English disease."

This cross-channel practice of mutual attribution of origin appears to have declined at the time of the En-

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tente Cordiale, perhaps because of the extreme cordiality of the entente at the very highest levels. The practice definitely ceased when, ten years later, the entente modulated into World War I, perhaps because of the shared experiences of such large numbers of the troops of both nations, perhaps because of the slowly-dawning perception that the French disease was really Maréchal Foch, the English disease Field Marshal Kitchener, both far more voracious for the blood of young men than the twirling spirochete ever dreamed of being.

At any rate, during those two centuries of Anglo-French compliments, it must have irked many a patriot on these shores, encountering the terms in life or letters (actually, the "French letter" was a widely used English preventative measure), that there seemed to be no such thing as "the American disease." Those troubled shades can rest easy. We have an American disease and have had for several decades now. Our disease is called Arms and we pass it along to the nations of the world as promiscuously and enthusiastically as any hooker with a heavy quota and no notion at all of hygiene.

In fact, of course, our understanding of our arms disease is much more primitive than that poor hooker's grasp of the itchings and suppurations going on in her principal business asset. She at least understands that something is wrong, uncomfortable, inconvenient. Given comparable symptomatic signs, we take them for evidence of blooming good health, seize any chance to preserve and increase our own infection, insist upon passing it along to friends and casual acquaintances everywhere. Try it, we tell them, once you get the hang of it, you'll love it. And in truth, we encounter little enough resistance to our military solicitations.

All this comes to mind with the announcement of a new drive for Congressional approval of plans to unload another six billion dollars worth of military equipment on a waiting world.

The six billion, to be sure, is the equivalent of perhaps two more recruits joining the Times Square regiment of platform boots and rococo wigs, an increment hardly to be noticed. The importance of the six billion lies in its evidence that in spite of everything—and everything is a lot—we still basically believe the American Disease is a good thing and everyone should have it.

The classic case of the American Disease is Pakistan. We armed that country—or its military regime, actually—to the teeth in the belief that this constituted an important defense against any possible drive into south Asia by the Russians or the Chinese. From the strict point of view of United States self-defense, this involved the interesting assumption that the Russians-Chinese (whom we regarded as the same thing during most of our arms build-up in Pakistan) would want to get to the Indian Ocean in order to sail around the Cape of Good Hope and up the Atlantic to attack us. When the Chinese did, in fact, run their brief and still somewhat mysterious incursion into India, the Pakistan arms kings naturally did nothing, except perhaps to hope that the Chinese would do a thorough job of it. The Chinese pulled out of their own accord, certainly not at the urging of either ourselves or our toy soldiers in that part of the world.

The next thing to happen was that the Pakistan military dictatorship, having all these American arms, decided to use them against their own people, the East Pakistani, presumably because they were handy and their extermination gave fairer promise of success than any expedition against the Russians or Chinese. We were amazed. Our amazement turned to distress when the Indians, moved by neighborly compassion, went to the assistance of the people being slaughtered by their own government. To express our concern over this defiance of American arms in other hands, we sailed a warship up and down the coast to warn the Indians not to interfere with American-sponsored genocide. The Indians recklessly defied us and plunged ahead in their mission of mercy, putting an end to the slaughter and assisting the survivors to organize a government of their own without American arms and hence without the capacity for mass killings. Those were gloomy days for the cause of freedom, as we oddly call it, but, preoccupied by the even more momentous defense of freedom in Vietnam and Cambodia, we suffered the humiliation bravely, did not invade India and learned absolutely nothing from the whole adventure. Our main concern in the aftermath was to restock the Pakistan arsenal, filling the gaps caused by the expenditure of so much ammunition, the loss of so much equipment in the effort to maintain domestic tranquillity in Pakistan.

The point about Pakistan is that the outcome was not some freak or sport of nature brought on by unique circumstances. The circumstances were those normally either created or greatly enhanced by the flow of American arms into our client states. If military goods are the chief import of a state and the obvious obsession of the state's supporter among the great powers, it makes a kind of common sense to have the state run by military men. And for military men everywhere, it makes sense to run any organization along military lines, with no back talk and with prior discussion limited to peers in rank or function.

The destruction of governments in Japan, Italy and now Holland by the American Disease is likewise no accident but absolutely inevitable in the system we have constructed. To meet the vast requirements of the open-ended American military plan, American military manufacturers have had to create the capacity for very large-scale production. That capacity can only be maintained by an ever increasing volume of business. As Broadway producers and magazine distributors have known for years, the easiest way to generate a lot of business in a hurry is to buy it. "Two-fers" are institutionalized on

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Broadway and anyone who subscribes to a large-circulation magazine at the printed rate is throwing money away. Lockheed and Northrop were following an established American business pattern with the difference that they weren't handing out bons-bons to the people who paid the bills, only to insiders. It's cheaper that way. Prince Bernhard was following the example of many an American housewife subscribing to the *Ladies' Home Journal*: the price is so good, you can't afford not to.

It can hardly surprise us that the itchings and suppurations we find so distressing when they appear among our arms clients, also turn up at home. Major arms procurement officials now automatically arrive in the Pentagon from second-rank positions in the arms industry, engage in procurement from their old firms at a good clip, then return to industry in first-rank positions. When this practice, now almost routine, is questioned, we are assured a) that contracts are awarded strictly on merit, never on the basis of past and future business connections, and b) that any other method is impossible. The latter contention may well be true, the buyer-sellers being the only people who really understand the business. If it is true, however, it is ground not for acquiescence but for seriously questioning the whole system, for addressing the American Disease as something to cure, or at least contain, not as something to enhance and further.

The week's news budget that began with the six billion increment in the arms dump ended with the word that Robert C. Moot, treasurer of the President Ford Committee, has been appointed to head a Pentagon advisory committee on the restructuring of arms contracts. Moot himself is a Pentagon graduate now in industry, but beyond that, you'd have to be a pretty dumb arms merchant not to get the connection and rush in your contribution. No one really gives a damn about any of them. That's the way things are and will go on being.

Meanwhile, at West Point, cadets cheat on examinations and are welcomed into continuing classes; those at Colorado Springs maintained a ring of forgery and theft for five years. Career training.

FRANK GETLEIN

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NORTH CAROLINA REPORT

AFTER THE SHOUTING

Television viewers caught a brief but fascinating glimpse of North Carolina politics at the Republican National Convention in Kansas City last month. Three scenes stand out: the scuffle between Rockefeller and Rocky Mount delegate Jack Bailey over possession of a "This is Reagan Country" sign; Tom Ellis standing on a chair and croaking hoarsely to delegates in the early morning hours of August 19, "This is a railroad;" Jesse Helms in his seconding speech for Reagan's nomination bitterly advising the convention to follow Solzhenitsyn's warning and "place our trust in God, not politicians."

These scenes, unrelated though they may have seemed to television viewers north of the Mason-Dixon Line, were closely intertwined. Like one of those puzzles made up of several boxes designed to fit neatly inside each other, the boxes ranged from Buckley on the national scene down to Helms and Ellis on the state level.

On the national level, with Wallace out of the running, it was natural for North Carolina's conservative Republican voters to endorse Reagan, standing as he did for such good old American values as remaining No. 1 militarily, advocating turn-of-the-century morality, and getting the chiselers off welfare. When Reagan tarnished his record by choosing a liberal running mate, ideologues in the party directed their attention to Senator James Buckley of New York, for in addition to his consistently conservative position, Buckley also possessed clean-cut good looks and an eloquent style.

On the state level, Jesse A. Helms, though less polished than Buckley, does have impeccable credentials for the ideological conservatism currently in vogue. He opposes prison reform, reduction of military spending, unionization, food stamp programs, and all manner of "liberal" measures. As a further fillip to the conservative wing of the party, Helms uses any means at hand to get his candidate nominated, as the state's Republican Convention strikingly illustrates. Though not requiring a list of potential delegates, North Carolina's preferential primary, at considerable expense to its citizens, does determine how votes must be cast at the National Convention. As a result of the primary, Reagan captured 28 votes, followed by Ford with 25, and one uncommitted. When the state convention met in June, however, the *éminence grise* behind the Reagan forces, Senator Helms, insisted that the list of 25 delegates proposed by Ford's N.C. campaign manager, Governor James Holshouser, be scrapped. He demanded, instead, that the convention approve a hand-picked list pledged, after duly voting for Ford on the first ballot, to switch to Reagan in the later balloting.

After the rejection of the Ford delegate list, Hols-

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houser, who is popular among Republicans for winning control of the governor's mansion for the first time in over seventy years, came to the convention, hat-in-hand, requesting a place for himself in the N.C. delegation. Helms adamantly refused; the only sop he was willing to extend to the Holshouser forces was his own decision not to seek a delegate position. Remembering the bruising politics used to gain control of all 54 N.C. delegates could hardly assuage Helms's bitterness over Reagan's defeat. It clarifies the last-ditch attempt to gain delegate support in his seconding speech for Reagan. The question, "Are we willing to give away the Panama Canal?" epitomized the conservative defense of the military posture of the U.S. and also foreshadowed the decision, announced in the *News and Observer* on August 25, that after 1976, Helms would no longer be a Republican.

With Helms exerting tight control, all Thomas F. Ellis, state manager of Reagan's campaign, had to do was carry out orders. Robert Shaw, the state Republican chairman who considered himself the one uncommitted delegate, found out how literally Ellis carried out orders. After duly casting his uncommitted vote, Shaw was surprised to hear Ellis announce the delegation's tally: 29 Reagan, 25 Ford. Questioned about the discrepancy, Shaw observed of Ellis, "He can say anything he wants." To keep the delegation in line, forcing it to accept Ford with a show of unanimity when the command came down from above required Ellis to use a short rein. He was compelled to work late every night of the convention, his voice becoming hoarse and raspy in the process.

The sidelines observer is apt to wonder how many Ellis' and Helms' North Carolina possesses. The kind of thinking they represent is not limited to one political party, for the Republican Helms won his Senate seat despite the overwhelmingly Democratic composition of the state's voter registration lists. In the absence of a selective sampling of voter choices, it may be worthwhile to study the pattern of preference of one segment of the population generally considered Democratic: the tiny Catholic population with its weekly organ, *The North Carolina Catholic*. The paper serves both the Raleigh and Charlotte dioceses, but the issues most deeply agitating its readers come from the Raleigh diocese where the iron rule of the late Bishop Vincent Waters has been replaced by that of the moderate, Bishop Joseph Gossman. The publication leans toward single-issue politics, with anti-abortion literature drawing strong support both from the editorial board and from letter-writers. On August 1, after the close of the Democratic Convention, *Salmagundi* lamented, "Chavis [Cesar E. Chavez], the Veteran and the Draft Dodger were given an audible hearing, but anti-abortion?—Forget it!"

Three other subjects aroused a flurry of responses: homosexuality, transcendental meditation, Communism. The most strongly worded letters condemned any softening of attitudes toward homosexuals and castigated the Greenville priest who supported such a ministry. One reader noted disapprovingly that in a photo of the group meeting to discuss the issue of homosexuality, Father was not wearing clerical attire and had his arm placed affectionately on the shoulders of one of the participants. Transcendental meditation, according to some readers, is a dangerous novelty undermining the saying of the Rosary and other "approved" devotions. Anyone who has anything good to say about Russians or communists is a threat to the community and country. One reader commented, "Sister is teaching her own brand of history to others . . . [She] should read Solzhenitsyn . . ." He cited in his letter several issues of Dr. Fred Schwarz's *Christian Anti-Communism Crusade*.

Though in each instance, broader-based attitudes asserted themselves in subsequent letters to the editor, the above comments indicate that Ellis is not a one-of-a-kind phenomenon limited to the clientele of the lesser-developed Piedmont and mountain areas in the western part of our state.

On the state level, there are signs that voters increasingly are rejecting narrow ideological positions identified with Helms and Ellis. The state primary returns were being flashed on the screen while the Republican Convention still was in progress. They showed, for example, that although George Wood, the only candidate opposing the death penalty, was defeated for the Democratic nomination for governor, the candidate for lieutenant governor, Howard N. Lee, the Black mayor who served with distinction in Chapel Hill, had gained a slim lead over Jimmy Green, assuring himself a place in the September 14 run-off election.

The Catholic community shows signs of change, also. The open forum provided by *The North Carolina Catholic* should help to blunt extreme positions, giving the moderates a chance to expose simplistic, single-issue thinking. The newly created Office of Peace and Justice may provide needed channels of communication between local perceptions of issues and information on how the larger society views them.

Viewers shocked at hearing Helms demand of the convention delegates, "Do Americans want a National Defense System that falls short of being No. 1 in the world?" should remember that among the less-traveled roads in our state, one still can find signs saying, "Fight Integration and Communism," and "This Is Klan Country." They might ponder further that the loud "no" in response to Helms's question came, not only from the 54 North Carolina delegates, but from other states as well.

LOIS SPEAR

(Sister Lois Spear, O.P.., teaches in the History Department of St. Augustine College in Raleigh.)

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A CATHOLIC PROBLEM? MAYBE

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

There is something daunting to the self about being relegated to any bloc or group and being ascribed certain attitudes and reflexes as part of that group. All of us who bear the label Catholic, no matter what our credentials or experience in the political and economic struggles of our time, know how indelible this labeling is. There are circles in which we are always and forever suspect.

I spent some hours this spring trying to convince some of my friends, who work in the coalition to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, that the way to enlist Mayor Daley's enthusiastic support in Illinois was not through the Pope or Cardinal Cody! "That really isn't the way it works," I told them. "I don't think the Pope is very much interested, and I'm sure that even Cardinal Cody wouldn't presume to tell Mayor Daley what to do." I don't think they believed me. Despite John Kennedy's assurances before the Houston ministers long ago, many Americans are still convinced that Catholics vote as they are told.

It was hard not to give a quiet cheer, then, for Mayor Daley the other day when he so doughtily stood by his endorsement of Jimmy Carter, thereby joining combat, it would seem, with no less an adversary than Cardinal Cody on their mutual home ground.

"There are more important issues this year than abortion," the Mayor is reported to have said. Somewhat unsettling to political strategists of the right-to-life forces coming from a faithful attendant at daily Mass! The Mayor was not yielding his place as a Catholic, however. He cautioned the Carter forces to abstain from trying to silence those who wanted an amendment to the Constitution and said that their voices should be listened to.

Mayor Daley's faithfulness to the Democratic party and his commitment to its candidate have no doubt heartened the Carter forces who realized, somewhat belatedly, that they had been cavalier in their treatment of the Catholic bishops and their representatives at the Democratic convention. Mayor Daley is evidence that, in the political order, no one is just Catholic: he or she is rich, poor, or middle-class; a farmer, auto worker, oil entrepreneur, migratory laborer, or union organizer. A person faced with the choice of presidential candidates has warring priorities. They *may* be the priorities of his ideological or religious group; they are more often his economic priorities.

Mayor Daley is also dramatic evidence that many a Catholic may agree with all the bishops that abortion is abhorrent, but might not agree with the majority that it should be prohibited by law. They are uncomfortably aware that many other convinced Christians have taken a stand against those very laws in the formal meeting of their churches. Insofar as the so-called Carter problem is centered on the pro-life political strategy, the Democrats may well take heart. But there are other aspects of the problem.

One Catholic columnist, rather carried away in the period of Democratic euphoria just after the convention, said that Jimmy Carter was sending a message to the bishops; that he understood the Catholic people better than they did. Does he? Does anyone? There are in the United States some 48 million Catholics. They are incredibly various in origin. They come from families who first came to this continent with Lord Baltimore in the 17th century or from Vietnamese families who arrived in the last air-lift. They are descended from the first French voyageurs along our northern border or Cajun descendants of the first French explorers in Louisiana; they are also newly-arrived French Canadians swelling the population of the New England border states. One-quarter of them are Spanish-speaking; within that Spanish-speaking population they vary from well-off descendants of the conquistadores and affluent Cuban refugees in Florida to Cesar Chavez's chicanos, and, to citizens of the Rio Grande valley, who came as wetbacks. In the central plains states they are Germans and central Europeans. In other words, they are not all Irish, Italians, or Poles.

Some of the gesures toward Catholics in the post-convention weeks seem to indicate not only a lack of sensitivity but a total lack of accurate information. What is one to think, for example, of a candidate who assured an interviewer that his openness toward Catholics was shown in his choice of issues coordinator, Joseph Duffy. He had apparently assumed that Unitarian Duffy was Catholic— isn't everyone with an Irish name? Wasn't there something rather specious about the announcement of a family problems coordinator on the candidate's first trip to New England and that that family advisor was Joseph Califano? When I was last in Washington people seemed to think that Mr. Califano's chief qualifications for this post were his Italian name and the fact that he was vice-presidential candidate Mondale's lawyer. (Senator Mondale's concern for the family and its problems is unquestioned. There are scores of his speeches and legislative proposals to support it.) One does not question the candidate's good will —just the premises on which he is acting.

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THE VIETNAM BABYLIFT

SUSAN ABRAMS

Was it a rescue mission or kidnapping?

"A mother in a burning building throws you her child. When the fire is out and the mother is safe, does one keep running with the child?"

—Attorney Tom Miller,
International Children's Fund

The Vietnam Babylift of April, 1975 was so cruel, so manipulative a public relations stunt that the past sixteen months have only dulled the shock. In many cases taken from parents pressured into signing adoption releases, destined for the homes of relatives, picked out of orphanages where they had been placed temporarily by parents unable to support them, taken from hospitals or even whisked off the streets, the 2242 Babylift children are still with us. Yet it has long been evident that the supposed rescue mission more closely resembled a kidnapping and that at least 1500 of the children are not eligible for adoption.

The concerted efforts of U.S. government officials and adoption agencies alike to save face by blocking a lawsuit designed to determine the children's identities and their parents' wishes are little known. One assumes, perhaps, that the issue has by now been resolved satisfactorily or, on the contrary, that nothing can be done and that Vietnamese parents must learn, as best they're able, to heal yet another wound of so many.

Most media coverage of the issue has been of the all trees/no forest variety, as journalists focus on individual custody struggles between American couples and Vietnamese refugee mothers who have managed to locate their children. Article after article enumerates the advantages each set of parents seems to offer, with the benefit scale tilting a bit as affluent Americans bring their cars and suburban homes on along with them. "How sad it is," the journalists seem to moan, "that the Babylift should have come to this, that a humanitarian project should end in battles where both sides are so worthy."

Yet the Babylift had to come to this. Supplying a babymarket is an ugly business, as are hysterical anti-Communism, some means of assuaging guilt, and, above all, the use of children as political pawns. One remembers the explanation of Graham Martin, U.S. Ambassador to Saigon, that the Babylift would "create a shift in American public opinion in favor of the Republic of Vietnam" (then begging funds from a reluctant Congress). Anticipating the great press coverage which would mark the children's arrival in the U.S., Martin commented that the effect "will be tremendous" (as quoted in a letter from Phan Quang Dan, Saigon's Deputy Premier for Social Welfare, from whom Martin had sought permission to evacuate the children, as published in the *New York Times*, April 7, 1975).

Nguyen Da Yen et al. v. Kissinger et al. was filed in U.S. District Court, San Francisco on April 29, 1975 after Muoi McConnell and other Vietnamese-speaking volunteers at San Francisco's Presidio discovered the children had left families behind. Federal officials refused to investigate. The case has been argued by four attorneys whose concern for the children's welfare is exceeded only by their enormous patience (Nancy Stearns, Tom Miller, Mort Cohen, and Neil Gotanda of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City and the International Children's Fund in Berkeley). Trotting out old and new variations on the Babylift-era slogans "We saved them from Communism" and "Grow-

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ing up American is best," the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and adoption agencies have been aided by crudely manipulated adoptive parents and by Judge Spencer Williams, the defendants' apparently willing accomplice in delay.

Last March Williams dissolved the class-action status of the case, thus, in effect, leaving it to Vietnamese parents to find their own children and to concerned lawyers to contemplate more than 2,000 separate cases —both impossible tasks. Lawyers for the plaintiffs, although with barely the funds to proceed, have appealed the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. A decision is expected this Fall. Should the higher court agree with plaintiffs that Williams erred in his handling of (all the major issues in) the case, it could be assigned to another district judge more capable of dealing with its complexities. If not, a seventeen-month effort to reunite non-orphans with their parents, to heal at least these wounds of the war, will probably come to nothing.

Struggle

Only a few of the steps in the struggle over the children can and need be described here—enough to hint at the plaintiffs' frustrations, which have been almost unknown, nationwide, to potential supporters. They also make clear the tenacity of a government trying to avoid political embarrassment and of adoption agencies fearful of lawsuits from disappointed American couples, loss of state licenses, and criminal penalties, should any children they placed be returned to Vietnamese parents.

Plaintiffs' lawyers were mindful that the children would soon forget Vietnamese and facts that could aid in tracing their parents. Also aware that the pain of separating children once again from a loving family would increase with each passing month, they urged speed. It took seven months (and an order from the Appeals Court) for INS to *begin* to make its records on the children available. Also questioning the court's authority to give it orders, INS treated the case like "any other. bureaucratic, unimportant thing," Nancy Stearns told me in a personal interview. Officials pleaded a shortage of clerical staff and duplicating machines, taking, at each stage, literally months to do a few days' work. Verne Jervis, INS Information Director in Washington, declined all comment on a dozen points I raised about INS motivation and delays, including the possibility that stalling was designed to make the plaintiffs give up the case and/or to spare the government embarrassment.

Judge Williams declined to prod INS into relinquishing its records or to stop changing a child's status from "ineligible for adoption" to "eligible."With misplaced congeniality, he declared he wouldn't order the government to do something "I think [it is] going to do. I'll give the government the benefit of the doubt" (plaintiffs' legal brief).

With all files at last in hand, attorneys discovered that documentation on 978 children was too meager to prove they were eligible. Parental releases for 533 others had been signed after March 15, 1975, i.e., in conditions of panic and confusion, and were therefore considered involuntary and invalid.

Not hampered by such scruples, INS presumed eligibility often where a child's very identity was unclear, thus "placing" (in plaintiffs' words) "the burden of proof on the children to establish their own ineligibility for adoption." Among those INS declared "eligible" were: 212 children from the An Lac Orphanage, whose group release listed a single family name for all of them; a child whose adoptive parents admitted to the INS they had obtained a perjured release from an orphanage director stating the child was an orphan, even though they knew he had never lived in the orphanage and that his mother was alive (she has since tried to regain custody).

Gaining access to the children's files was the first part of the struggle; tracing parents has been the second. The International Red Cross and other agencies skilled at tracing have offered the U.S. government their assistance. They're still waiting, unable to proceed without State Department approval. Lacking (through its own fault) diplomatic relations with Vietnam, the State Department has also tried to explain away its own inaction, citing the supposed indifference and lack of cooperation on the part of the Vietnamese. "The ball, however, is in the United States' court," plaintiffs' attorney Tom Miller told me, in an apt, if unintended pun. After all, Miller emphasized, "there is [and was] nothing to prevent the U.S. government from returning the children to their parents without the lawsuit."

The State Department first rejected any and all tracing programs in Vietnam, later agreeing to, but not implementing, a plan for advertising in Vietnamese newspapers that some children (no names to be used) were in the U.S. Even assuming all Vietnamese could read and lived in cities, it's a bit indirect! Tracing experts stress that effective programs require actively seeking out individual families. With rather belated concern for the Vietnamese parents, the State Department expressed its wish to protect them from retaliation by the Vietnamese government (which, as Vietnam expert Garth Porter testified in court, seems to view the bereaved parents as victims rather than delinquents). Still sniffing (hoping for?) a bloodbath, dismissing Red Cross assurances of protection for all parties and, as ever, undaunted by reality, the State Department was, however, unable to muster any evidence in court for the fears it professed. The plaintiffs' attorneys, on the other hand, brought forward a number of reliable witnesses, including American Friends Service Committee and

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Mennonite Central Committee staff in Vietnam after war's end, as well as Americans who had been present at reeducation sessions. They made it clear (to all but the ever-anxious defendants) that their fears were unfounded.

For their part (and with equal cynicism), adoption agency spokespersons also opposed a tracing program on the grounds that it would reopen wounds of guilt-ridden parents or lead to social ostracism for mothers of children of mixed race. They too were unimpressed by evidence that only 20 percent of Babylift children (whom they themselves had brought here) were of mixed race and that even according to (U.S.) Agency for International Development figures, at least 90 percent of the 10,000-15,000 mixed-race children in Vietnam had been living with relatives. Like the INS spokesman, the directors of the two adoption agencies most frequently cited in post-Babylift problems (Friends of the Children of Vietnam and Friends for All Children)

did not bother to reply to my questions on their procedures or motivation.

Stated opposition to tracing programs obviously masks the fear that the origins of the Babylift will be exposed. Why else make no efforts to locate parents among refugees in the U.S. (and defy the claims of refugees who find their children)? What reprisals are in the offing in Kansas or Vermont? Judge Williams finally agreed with plaintiffs' demand that he notify refugees of the lawsuit; however, he never got around to doing so. Even those refugees who suspect their children are here seldom know their new names, the addresses of adoptive parents, or even the relevant adoptive agency.

At least a dozen refugees have managed to find their children. No one can say how many others will succeed eventually. The custody struggles have been fierce, although there are exceptions, like John DeCamp of Nebraska, who relinquished two children after being moved by their tearful reunion with their mother. As Judge Williams would not consider her case, San Shie had to go through California state courts to win custody of Hien, at a cost of $5000 (which few other refugees could muster). A Doylestown, Pa. couple won't give her two nephews to Jeanette Strump (Vietnamese despite her name), although their mother had written Strump's name and address on the children's clothes, tags, and even on their skin, before putting them on the Babylift. A desperate Hao Thi Vo resorted to kidnapping her two sons from their Connecticut adoptive father. Nguyen Thi Phuc has just lost her custody struggle for two sons (at first in the care of a child molester) to the commander of Ft. Pickett in Blackstone, Virginia. In the grimmest case so far, a sheriff in the southwest obtained two children from Huynh Thi O fraudulently and then committed her to a mental hospital after she persisted in efforts to regain them. She was found dead in his home last June, in what the man claims was a suicide.

At least one case has been documented of collaboration between an adoption agency (Friends of the Children in Vietnam) and an American couple to prevent a Vietnamese mother from regaining custody. INS is encouraging Americans to try to formalize adoptions in state courts even where children are clearly ineligible. It's an obvious means of circumventing *Nguyen Da Yen v Kissinger*.

Lisa Brodyaga is unique among all the American adoptive parents in her open and persistent attempts to help clear up the Babylift mess. Neither government officials nor Friends of the Children of Vietnam will help her find the family My Hang, age seven, still talks of rejoining. "You take three airplanes and two buses and you go upstairs to where the children are sleeping and that's where mother is," she repeats, but, unfortunately, it's not enough for Brodyaga's do-it-yourself tracing program. FCVN explicitly instructed adoptive parents, Brodyaga told me in a personal interview, "to disregard the facts [the children] tell us about their families," as they are inventing stories in the process of "trying to work through all the stuff that's happened to them." FCVN has given Brodyaga a runaround as imaginative as it is deceitful. Even identifying My Hang by the wrong name, FCVN staff told Brodyaga the child's files were in order and would follow shortly, then that they were with an employee temporarily out of town. Later they claimed they had an adoption release (whose specifics they wouldn't reveal), then didn't have one. At one time, the director for adoption told Brodyaga FCVN was being secretive in order to protect the mother from Communist retaliation; a careless volunteer later revealed that FCVN had burned documents on all children before leaving Vietnam, lest they "fall into the wrong hands" (one wonders if those are the Communists' or those of the American adoptive parents?). FCVN finally outdid even itself by notifying Brodyaga that a priest from My Hang's village had recently given them information about her while passing through Colorado (where FCVN is located). Eager to speak with him herself, Brodyaga was told that no one had bothered

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to write down his name and that he was then on his way to Latin America.

Angry, confused by the controversy in which they find themselves, their wish to shelter homeless children betrayed by the Babylift organizers, the adoptive parents seem, in many cases, to be well-meaning. Some appear to have wanted to adopt at least as much for their own benefit as that of the children's, e.g. as a means of assuaging guilt over the war or, in the words of Louise Bruyn, of "giving meaning to their lives." Along with Marj Swann (another long-time anti-war activist associated with the American Friends Service Committee in Massachusetts) Bruyn established a wartime program of American aid to Buddhist orphanages and sponsorships for children in Vietnamese foster homes. Public and media response to the program amounted to only the tiniest fraction of that which the flashier Babylift received. The reasons, Bruyn told me, may lie with American "individualism and response to the personal . . . to the individual child [rather than the social context, the political implications]. That's the place where we really can be reached the closest." This can mean adoption of an individual child rather than protesting a war which might have killed its parents or giving financial aid to keep the child where it belonged.

Chauvinism and racism are abundantly available and have marked more than a few adoptive parents' statements on custody struggles. Joan Thompson, one of those organizing opposition to the lawsuit, commented: "We think this is the best country possible—the kids have so [sic] much better chance to grow here, to be what they want. In Vietnam they would be a fisherman or dirt farmer" (*New York Times Magazine,* May 9, 1976). Bonnie and Johnny Nelson of Forest City, Iowa, are trying to prevent four-year-old Doan Van Binh (renamed Ben) from returning to his mother (now living in Great Falls, Montana). Their lawyer described the child in an Iowa court as having an identity with the Nelsons; in Great Falls he would be known as 'that Vietnamese kid, an alien.' There [he] would have no identity." At age eighteen, if still with the Nelsons, he will be indoctrinated into the American way of life." If, however, he is "jerk[ed] out of the Nelson home . . . what will [he] be?" (*San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle,* April 25, 1976).

Sadly one wonders what Ben Nelson and hundreds of other Babylift children will be when, as non-white children in white homes, they begin to question their identity, to confront racism they've been ill-equipped to deal with, and perhaps discover the circumstances under which they arrived in the U.S. and were retained by their adoptive parents.

Still claiming to know what is best for the Vietnamese and happy to oblige parents whose self-interest coincides with their own, adoption agencies are insisting that the traditional standard used in custody struggles, that of "the best interests of the child," be used even in interracial and intercountry adoptions of such extraordinary circumstances. One wonders how many local judges will choose to see "best interests" in terms other than affluence, status, upward mobility, and Americanism? Nancy Stearns and the other lawyers for the plaintiffs insist that children taken illegally from parents who can be located must be returned to them. To weight the "best interests" as urged would be to accept the given, to obscure the past.

Never abandoning the fiction of their neutrality and with enough gall to shock (if plaintiffs hadn't long since become immune), the defendants who have stymied the case for over a year assert that the passage of time since removal from Vietnam, even if the removal was illegal, precludes the return of the child in the "best interest of the child" (plaintiffs' legal brief). Thus the longer they delay, the stronger the defendants' case.

Operation Babylift was, one discovers with dismay, simply the last (if best publicized) chapter in a rather sordid adoption history. While the confusion toward war's end made the Babylift an especially sloppy project, the pre-Babylift adoption agency record was nothing to be proud of either. In some cases closely tied to the U.S. Agency for International Development, agencies were ignorant of the Vietnamese practice of extended family care for parentless children, of existing foster-care options, and of the availability of more Vietnamese adults willing to take in a homeless child. (*Xay cha con chu, xay me di cho bu:* If you lose your father, you still have your uncle;/If you lose your mother, your aunt will still nurse you—Vietnamese saying.) The agencies supplied a babymarket in the U.S. (now dependent on South Korea and other countries) for couples tired of waiting for white infants and unwilling to engage in the "black market" for babies or to adopt an older, handicapped or (ironically) a mixed-race child. There was no incentive for agencies to encourage Vietnamese women to keep their children. In fact, as Tran Tuong Nhu and Tom Miller write of their experience with adoption agencies in Vietnam, "All the agencies basically functioned on the premise that the Vietnamese were incapable of looking after their own children."

One example must suffice of how bizarre some Babylift precedents in fact were. Doug Hostetter of the Methodist Mission to the United Nations told me in a personal interview recently that during his three years in Vietnam he came across incidents of the following ploy. An adoption agency employee would offer hospital care for a sick child to parents who accepted it as an expression of genuine concern. With the child restored to health, the "benefactor" then presented a bill which the startled parents could never pay. The staff member then offered to take care of it—in exchange for a release signing over the child for adoption.

Reports from Saigon since the war's end tell of or-

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phanages being emptied, of children welcomed back into their own families or received by new ones, treasured among their own people, to be raised in their own land. The will to accomplish so much had been lacking under Thieu/American control.

If alternatives to intercountry adoption made the Babylift unnecessary, the Geneva Convention of 1949 (of which the U.S. is a signatory) apparently made it illegal. Homeless children, if removed from their native land in time of war, should be cared for in a *neutral* country by "persons of a similar cultural tradition." The Convention further stipulates that the children's right to return to their homeland should be guaranteed.

To help ensure that there are no more Babylifts, the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church has, with Hostetter's guidance, drawn up guidelines on aid to children during war or natural disaster which specifically exclude intercountry adoption except in certain very restricted cases. Hostetter expressed to me the hope that religious groups of various persuasions will take the lead in opposing intercountry adoptions generally and will "develop a conscience" on what he described as "another form of exploitation of Third World countries' resources." The blame for engaging in intercountry adoptions doesn't lie with the American adoptive parents, Hostetter stressed. While sometimes paternalistic and even selfish [and, one might add, naive], most, he feels are well-meaning. Thus the churches which fund many adoption agencies and ought to know better should take the responsibility here.

The Methodists have also passed a resolution calling upon the House Judiciary Committee to investigate the Babylift and the actions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. One hopes other religious groups, secular groups, and concerned individuals would do the same. The longer the Babylift issue remains unresolved, the greater the potential harm: to the children, to the Americans who love and may yet lose them, to the Vietnamese who still grieve for the children they may never find.

CATHOLICS AND TEMPERANCE

JOSEPH H. FICHTER

The general Catholic attitude toward alcohol

If there is a general Catholic attitude toward the drinking of alcoholic beverages it is probably reflected in the doggerel verse attributed to the late English convert, Hilaire Belloc:

> Wherever a Catholic sun doth shine
> There's always laughter and good red wine.
> At least, I've always heard it's so,
> *Benedicamus Domino.*

In his popular travelogue, *The Path to Rome*, Belloc wrote almost as much about drinking as he did about religion, and sometimes he connected the two, as when he distinguished between Bacchus and the Devil, and warned a young man that "he should never drink what has been made and sold since the Reformation—I mean especially spirits and champagne. Let him (said I) drink red wine and white, good beer and mead—if he could get it—liqueurs made by monks, and, in a word, all those feeding, fortifying, and confirming beverages that our fathers drank in old time; but not whisky, nor brandy, nor sparkling wines, nor absinthe, nor the kind of drink called gin." The friend to whom he had given this advice drank whisky one day and the consequence was that "he had to take some nasty pledge or other to drink nothing whatever and became a spectacle and a judgment, whereas if he had kept his exact word he might by this time have been a happy man."

Besides the implied preference for Catholic (pre-Reformation) over Protestant (post-Reformation) patterns of drinking, Belloc may not have been aware that his distinction between fermented and distilled alcoholic beverages also reflected the thinking of the earliest temperance advocates in England, Ireland and the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. When the American Surgeon General warned against "ardent spirits" he was not talking about wines. The Ulster Temperance Society in 1829 declared it a "plain dictate of common sense" that fermented wines be approved and retained as a "customary beverage" but that people ought to refrain from distilled liquor like brandy, whisky and gin.

The Anglo-Irish members of these "moderation" societies were not only chiefly Protestants, they were also members of the more advantaged ranks of society. They

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saw the drunkenness of the lower classes in England and Ireland as a social evil that had to be eradicated. A half-century later this concept of differential status drinking was noted when a Catholic plantation owner in Louisiana welcomed the famous Father Mathew to live and preach among them but did not embrace the virtue of abstinence. "Very few of their number took the pledge—the break with tradition would have been too great—but they strongly recommended their overseers and free servants to do so, and at times provided facilities for enrolling their slaves.

The masses of poor people in Ireland were Catholics, but it was their socio-economic status rather than their religion that differentiated their drinking habits from those of upper-class Irish Protestants. This is not to say that the poor drink more, and the wealthy less, or vice versa. John Dollard's oft-quoted impressionistic account of class differentials suggests that upper-class drinking is done in a controlled fashion by both men and women while lower-class people, mainly males, tend to lack self-restraint while drinking. It is quite likely that a condescending attitude of this kind informed the early Anglo-Irish promoters of a temperance movement that would selectively allow them the genteel pleasures of fermented wines while condemning the lower classes for their excesses in the use of distilled spirits.

The criteria of social status include not only income and education but also ethnicity and religion, especially among the varieties of peoples who came to the United States. Gusfield argues that we cannot understand the history of the American temperance movement unless we place "liquor, beer and wine in the context of social classes, ethnic cultures, and different life styles." Sobriety, emotional control, industry and punctuality—and whatever else went into the so-called Protestant Ethic—were understood to be middle-class American virtues. At mid-nineteenth century the observation was made that upper-class Episcopalians and lower-class Catholics were both permissive of drinking because neither group accepted the middle-class Protestant ideology.

The propaganda of the temperance movement, and especially of the Anti-Saloon League, was pointed at the uplift and reform of the drink-sodden working class. The wife and children of the workingman suffered miserably when he drank up his wages in some ill-smelling saloon. Poverty and its attendant social evils would be alleviated if poor people could be persuaded, or forced, to stop drinking alcoholic beverages. "The saloon is the prime source of all this pauperism and of all its attendant social evils. Thither the laborer and the mechanic bring their hard-earned dollars, only to find themselves penniless when demand for work slackens. There, fortunes are wrecked, the ruin of which precipitates embezzlements and fraudulent bankruptcies; there energy is paralyzed and idleness consecrated."

Compassion for the poor and underprivileged was certainly a factor among the crusaders for temperance. Father Mathew's apostolate of total abstinence, which began among the poor people of Ireland, brought him to America for two and a half years. He was concerned about his immigrant countrymen. "The overwhelming majority of these exiles were facing a hard struggle in the land of their adoption, and there was grave danger of them falling victims to the evils of drunkenness." The temperance crusaders generally seemed to focus on the plight of the poor urban Irish Catholic Americans.

Aside from socio-economic class, however, ethnicity was also a criterion of status differentials in drinking patterns. Different from Anglo-Irish immigrants, the continental immigrants, both Catholic and Lutheran Germans, and later Italians, Poles and Slavs, frequently exhibited annoyance at the efforts of temperance, abstinence and prohibition groups. By and large, they preferred wine and beer to hard liquor, and they looked upon these potations as almost staples of their daily diet. They did not consider their drinking habits in need

of reform, and they generally resisted the nativist, middle-class attempts to impose prohibitory restraints upon them.

The crusade of middle-class Protestants for total abstinence from alcoholic beverages got its organized start in Boston in 1826, under the tutelage of clergymen like Lyman Beecher, William Lloyd Garrison and William Channing. As the movement gained strength and proliferated in large numbers of temperance societies, it switched its emphasis from voluntary abstinence to a prohibition movement that would call upon the government to outlaw the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages of all kinds. The National Prohibition Party became a political reality in Detroit in 1867, the Women's Christian Temperance Union came into being in 1874, and the Anti-Saloon League was formed in 1896. The power and influence of these three organizations culminated in the ratification of the eighteenth amendment to the United States Constitution in 1919.

Most American Catholics (as well as Jews and Episcopalians) were opposed to the establishment of federal prohibition. This discredited national experiment and the whole crusade to abolish alcoholic beverages have been so thoroughly labeled Protestant that relatively little attention has been given to the temperance move-

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ment among American Catholics. Joan Bland's *Hibernian Crusade* recounts that an Irish Temperance Society existed in Boston from 1835. While this was definitely a Catholic organization, its members resolved "not to recognize each other as Protestant or Catholics, nor as Whigs or as Democrats, but as temperance men, and temperance men only." This focus on the drinking problem itself, and not on the religious and political affiliation of drinkers, was later to become a central principle of the Alcoholics Anonymous fellowship.

As the mood and aim of the reform movement changed from temperance to abstinence to prohibition, American Catholics inaugurated more temperance groups than abstinence groups. The original Mathew pledge, taken over from Quaker William Martin, contained the phrase "except used medicinally, and by order of a medical man." This notion, that physicians could prescribe alcoholic beverage for reasons of health, was soon dropped from the pledge, and it became less and less tenable as the concept of complete abstinence grew stronger. Archbishop Purcell once said that he enjoyed very fine health during the decade when he was totally abstinent, as though to testify that good health does not really suffer when one stops drinking.

The Catholic temperance groups kept their own identity and formed their own separate national association, the Catholic Total Abstinence Union, in Baltimore, in 1872. Some years later, the reigning Pontiff, Leo XIII, praised this organization with the words: "We esteem worthy of commendation the noble resolve of those pious associations, by which they pledge themselves to abstain totally from every kind of intoxicating drink." The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 admonished those Catholics who sell intoxicating liquors and urged that they adopt "a more decent method of gaining a livelihood." Ten years later, in 1894, Bishop Watterson of Columbus, Ohio, promulgated a diocesan law excluding liquor dealers and saloon keepers from membership in Catholic societies or associations.

Because of persistent anti-Irish, anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiments among nativist Americans, Catholics generally held aloof from the strongly Protestant temperance movement. Yet, there were some exceptions. Bishop Kenrick spoke on abstinence in Presbyterian churches; Archbishop Ireland was instrumental in founding the National Anti-Saloon League; the first convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America coincided with the national convention of the Prohibition Party and the two groups exchanged courteous greetings. The famous Frances Willard of the Women's Christian Temperance Union addressed the 1891 convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union and invited the Catholics to send delegates to the WCTU meeting in Boston later that year. "She would like a priest, but they must be sure to send a woman too."

This tolerant and ecumenical spirit was apparently shared only by some of the top leaders in the temperance movement. Perhaps more typical were the objections laid down by Bishop John Fitzpatrick when Father Mathew mingled with Protestants and addressed a large open meeting on the Boston Commons. "The platform was also covered by sectarian fanatics, Calvinistic preachers and deacons and other such who also made their speeches. The appearance of fellowship between a Catholic priest and such men can hardly be without evil results."

Tensions between Catholics and Protestants were heightened, and cooperation on temperance concerns was made less likely, during the presidential election campaign of 1884. It was at this time that a Presbyterian minister, Reverend Burchard, spoke in favor of the Republican candidate, James G. Blaine, and declared that the antecedents of the Democratic party had been "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion." Blaine lost that election to Grover Cleveland, but the same anti-Catholic slogan was resurrected when the Catholic governor of New York became the Democratic candidate in the presidential campaign of 1928. This slogan, animated with even greater venom than it had been almost fifty years earlier, was probably responsible in part for the defeat of Alfred Smith, and for the election of the Republican candidate, Herbert Hoover.

The Total Abstinence Union had its vocal opponents among the Catholic population. Fraternization with Protestants in the temperance movement and elsewhere, especially when it seemed to lead to the "Americanization" of Catholicism about which Leo XIII warned in his letter *Testem Benevolentiae*,was frowned upon by prominent prelates like Archbishop Corrigan of New York, Bishop McQuaid of Rochester, and the bishops of the Province of Milwaukee. The so-called "heresy" of Americanism was only peripheral to the Catholic temperance movement, but the church leaders who were supposedly guilty of this heresy also happened to be staunch supporters of total abstinence.

The opposition to the Catholic Abstinence Union came much more strongly from another direction, that of the continental immigrants who did not share the Anglo-Irish preoccupation with alcoholic beverages. The large German-speaking community "could see no reason to add to the commandments of God and the Church any alien Puritan excrescences. If the Irish could not practice moderation, let them take pledges, but let them not trouble their stronger brethren with such eccentric ideas."

As the temperance groups moved even closer to total legal prohibtion German Catholics saw it as a threat to their beer gardens. Their clergy generally "had not the slightest objection to a workingman's enjoying his glass of beer on Sunday in a saloon or in a beer garden." One of the obstacles seen by the fervent Catholic

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abstainers was the fact that the Benedictine monastery at Latrobe, Pennsylvania, had a flourishing business of making and selling lager beer. Their wholesale distribution of barrels of beer provided needed income for the maintenance of their apostolic ministry, and they had the consent of the Holy See to operate a brewery. As the threat of legal prohibition loomed larger during the first world war, more and more Catholics became alarmed. Finally, "Archbishop Messmer of Milwaukee forbade any priest visiting in his Archdiocese to deliver addresses in favor of prohibition or under the auspices of the Anti-Saloon League."

Catholic Drinking

The "noble" experiment of national prohibition has come and gone but the genuine question of temperance, that is, moderation in the use of alcoholic beverages, continues among the American people. In the heat of the arguments between continental and Irish immigrants, between abstinent Protestants and drinking Catholics, between those who favored and those who opposed legally enforced prohibition, it is sometimes forgotten that the great majority of those who "took the pledge" were neither heavy drinkers nor alcoholics. By virtue of their religious convictions the Protestant temperance people were non-drinkers. Catholics were never convinced that drinking is immoral, but they recognized the practice of abstinence as a spiritual virtue of self-denial that helped them to lead a better Christian life.

While the pledge was taken by many people, both Catholics and Protestants, who had a "drinking problem," the great majority of members of both the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Catholic Total Abstinence Union were not "reformed drunks." At the present time there are, of course, many "teetotalers" in the American population, and there is a complex of motivation for the personal decision to abstain totally. Unfortunately, however, the contemporary notion seems to be that the pledge is only for people who cannot handle their liquor.

It has been a long time since Catholic immigrants, both Irish and continental, composed the "huddled masses" of poor and underprivileged people who gave so much concern to the prohibitionists. As sociologists are wont to say, various factors have accounted for the "status enhancement" of the Catholic population, and Gusfield also remarks that the "socialization of each succeeding generation reduces the importance of abstinence as a symbol differentiating the respectable middle class from the non-respectable drinkers." Religion and ethnicity are still among the criteria of social status but they no longer draw the sharp lines they once did between Catholicism and Protestantism.

The historical—and questionable—explanation of the drinking habits of American Catholics on the basis that they represented the poor working classes of this country is no longer tenable. If there is a difference between Catholic and Protestant patterns of drinking at the present time it cannot be explained on the cultural fact that drinking behavior varies according to the social class to which the drinker belongs. American Catholics now are generally well distributed throughout the class structure (with the obvious exception of ethnic enclaves like Chicanos, French-Canadians and Puerto Ricans).

Residential location combines with other variables in the sociological attempt to "explain" American drinking patterns. For example, there is a higher percentage of abstainers among rural and small town Protestants than among urban and suburban Catholics and Jews. Abstainers also tend to score high on the index of religious fundamentalism, an index which is hardly applicable to American Catholics. In so far as fundamentalism continues mainly as a non-urban phenomenon it is not likely to affect Catholics who are mainly city people in this country.

One of the interesting findings on American drinking habits is that "a bi-modal drinking pattern is more typical of native American Protestants than of first- and second-generation Americans, both Catholics and Jews. The bi-modality implies that both abstainers and hard drinkers are more numerous among Protestants than among non-Protestants, where the moderate drinker is the more frequent case." The suggestion here, which seems to call for further research testing, is that Catholics tend to avoid both "extremes," that of complete abstinence and that of excessive drinking. If this finding is confirmed in future studies, it will support the perennial Catholic teaching of genuine moderation, or temperance.

Other comparative research has been done across denominational lines and it demonstrates that among American males, Catholics have a higher proportion of drinkers than do Protestants. Cahalan and his associates in a recent national survey found that one-third of Catholic men are "heavy drinkers" as compared to 23 percent of liberal Protestant males, and 13 percent of conservative Protestant males. "Catholics had relatively high proportions of both drinkers and heavy drinkers. Liberal Protestants showed a pattern of drinking that was remarkably close to that of the Catholics as regards proportions of drinkers, but with fewer heavy drinkers. In the Irish-American population the proportion of heavy drinkers is much higher among liberal Protestants than among Catholics. Heavy drinkers, as defined in this study, are those who "drink nearly every day with five or more [drinks] per occasion at least once in a while, or about once weekly with usually five or more per occasion."

National surveys on religious practices reveal consistently that Catholics attend religious services with

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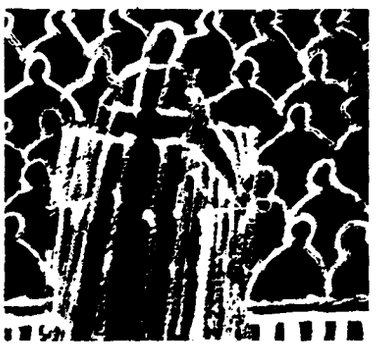
greater frequency than do Protestants. When this is related to alcoholic beverages one may expect that the frequent church-goers tend to be abstainers. Cahalan found that "the proportion of abstainers was relatively high among those who attended church most frequently," and those who stay away from church are morely likely to be drinkers. Catholics, however, do not fit exactly these neat categories. The same survey found that "among all groups except Catholic men, those who went to church every week had materially fewer heavy drinkers. Among Catholic men there was a slightly higher proportion of heavy drinkers among the weekly church-goers; this proportion was not much higher than for less-than-weekly Catholic men church-goers, but was materially higher than for all other groups."

Church affiliation always has implications for moral behavior and the great leaders of temperance movements, Catholic and Protestant, were always deeply preoccupied with the morality of drinking. Perhaps this point still needs to be clarified by making a sharp distinction between drinking and alcoholism. The great majority of Americans who drink, even those who are daily or heavy drinkers, are not afflicted with alcoholism. The fact that ingestion of alcohol is dangerous, and ultimately fatal, to the confirmed alcoholic does not mean that the person who drinks regularly is the same as an alcoholic. A second important distinc-



tion is between those religious fundamentalists who believe that it is sinful to imbibe alcoholic beverages in any form, and the great majority of Western Christians who believe that there is nothing immoral in the moderate and proper use of alcohol. As Bishop John Keane said in discussing the movement for Catholic total abstinence: "the church of Christ can never ally herself with Manicheism or fanaticism, by teaching that intoxicating drinks are bad in themselves, or that whoever uses them in any way is guilty of sin."

In his vehement denunciation of the "evil of intemperance," John Ireland turned to medical terms in calling drunkenness a disease, a malady, an epidemic. "Intoxicants create a morbid appetite, the tyranny of which is increased by each indulgence, until it becomes a disease that defies the control of reason and will. The general craving for alcohol in the population at the present day has, by long and continuous indulgence, become a deep-seated malady, and no longer a controllable appetite. It is a veritable epidemic" and it was doing more harm than that done previously by the black plague, the yellow fever and the Asiatic cholera.

If Ireland's rhetoric did seriously imply a disease concept of alcoholic overindulgence, it was much more extensive than the carefully worded medical definition now in use. "Alcoholism is a psychogenic dependence on or physiological addiction to ethanol, manifested by the inability of the alcoholic consistently to control the start of drinking or its termination once started." Most experts in the field of alcoholism, as well as a small but increasing number of the general public, now appear to be moving away from moral condemnation of the alcoholic to an acceptance of alcoholism as a disease. Jellinek suggests that it was only in the nineteenth century that this "new approach" began to take hold and that the disease concept of alcoholism increasingly attracted the attention of the medical profession.

If alcoholism is an illness, is the alcoholic likely to insist that he is not morally culpable for his drinking performance? If, on the other hand, alcoholism is morally and socially reprehensible is the society likely to insist that the alcoholic be arrested and punished for intoxication? Jellinek himself said that the "misapplication" of the disease concept of alcoholism "will tend to weaken the ethical basis of social sanctions against drunkenness." Similarly it may be said that the "misapplication" of the ethical concept of alcoholism will tend to lessen the importance of bio-medical and psychological therapy in the treatment of alcoholics.

Sickness evokes sympathy. Sin is met with condemnation. Much of the stigma of alcoholism, if not the ultimate responsibility for excessive drinking, has been lessened by the widespread propaganda about the so-called "allergy concept" of alcoholic addiction. The substance of this notion is that "those who become alcoholics possess a physiological allergy to alcohol such that their addiction is predetermined even before they take their first drink." This involves again old questions about epidemiology and the biological and hereditary factors of alcoholism that are still not satisfactorily answered, but it helps to alleviate moral condemnation. Relatives and friends are more ready to sympathize with a sick person than with an immoral person, but for the alcoholic himself there remains the obligation to take the necessary steps to "arrest" the illness.

As late as 1954 Ford observed that the disease concept of alcoholism "has not met with universal acceptance." He strongly emphasized his belief that "the average alcoholic is sick in body, mind and soul, and usually cannot stop drinking without outside help." The notion that there is here a spiritual illness, a "sickness of the soul," falls strangely on the ears of most medical and psychological researchers. Paul Kaunitz, a practic-

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ing physician more interested in therapy than in causality, opposes the concept of alcoholism as an illness, but he praises Alcoholics Anonymous as "the single most effective agent for the management of those alcoholics who recognize their addiction and desire help."

This approach to therapy bothers some professional researchers because it is not subject to quantitative measurement and it is thus "insufficiently scientific." Yet it is this baffling spiritual component, involving both moral accountability and religious faith, that characterizes the unique and successful program of Alcoholics Anonymous. The membership is fully aware that personal responsibility does not permanently disappear under the shadow of illness, and yet they confess freely that "we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." They are not old-time prohibitionists, condemning the evils of drink in the populace, nor a temperance society persuading people to stop drinking. In fact, only sick alcoholics are permitted to join the fellowship.

The spiritual philosophy and the personal comradeship of Alcoholics Anonymous have deliberately avoided any attempt at a political organization, a national reform movement, or a formal affiliation with any religious denomination. There are those who look upon it as a kind of religious sect, a "new revivalism," but it can in no sense be termed an ecclesiastical or organized religion. Nor are any direct ties formed with any existing social welfare programs. The sole purpose is the maintenance of sobriety of the individual with the cooperation of Divine Power and with the ready mutual support of fellow members. "Nearly every A.A. member comes to believe in and depend upon a higher Power which most of us call God. In A.A. practically no full recovery from alcoholism has been possible without this all-important faith."

The Catholic Total Abstinence Union, which was largely "Hibernian," has been replaced by various temperance groups which still accept non-drinkers into membership. When Matt Talbot died in Dublin his reputation for saintliness and sobriety quickly spread to the United States where a Matt Talbot Legion was instituted by the Carmelite Fathers. Most groups, however, are concerned about the suffering alcoholic. When Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in 1935, one of its earliest supporters was Jesuit Father Edward Dowling who helped to start the first A.A. group in St. Louis. The concern about deepening the spiritual phase of continued sobriety led to the establishment of the Calix Society in 1949 by a small group of Catholic alcoholics in Minneapolis. There was no question of competition with, or separation from, the A.A. fellowship. Calix is the "handmaid" to Alcoholics Anonymous. "The Calix Society is the Catholic program for spiritual recovery. It was established to reshape and reconstruct a spiritually sick Catholic man or woman."

The striving for spiritual reconstruction still confronts the person who suffers from an illness that is widely considered chronic and incurable. The need for moral regeneration inevitably makes the person face the matter of moral culpability. We are not speaking here of the virtue of temperance, which allows controlled and judicious use of alcohol, but of the virtue of complete abstinence. For a long time the notion was prevalent that inebriety is always morally wrong and that the inebriate is always morally culpable. The sick alcoholic still has the moral obligation to maintain sobriety. The moralist, John Ford, pointed out that "although the alcoholic may be powerless over alcohol and unable at times directly to resist the craving for drink, yet it is within his power generally speaking, to do something about his drinking. He is therefore responsible for taking the necessary means to get over his addiction."

RICHARD A. HAWLEY

THE POOR AMONG YOU ALWAYS

Since our first delightful appropriation
Of rather more than enough,
We have had the poor,
A constant about the edges
Of our purposeful coming and goings.
Statistically, they are always
On the rise.

We read about or imagine them
Massing in millions to complain.
They are absolutely out of everything;
There is no sound, no cry to express it.
They can only stand there, nothing
But bright eyes and bulbous bellies,
Good examples of less than bread alone.

Nobody hates them.
Caesar, King, and Czar were always glad
To increase the dole, millions of coins
Pass through them as flurries of crusts through pigeons.
The next day they are back,
On edge but never excited.
The worst has already happened.

Only slightly do they bother business,
Whole northern nations shun them.
Occasionally a missionary finds himself,
His lovely gospel new in their midst.
Each of them is ill;
In lines they wait politely for a shot,
Too much or too little to say to say a thing.

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SECOND THOUGHTS ON SEX

PETER STEINFELS

In my last column I was lamenting the tendency of first-rate thinkers to write about recent changes in sexual mores from an Olympian distance—or should I say more-than-Olympian, out of deference to the libidinal energies of the ancient pantheon. Exhibit A was a lengthy review-essay by J. M. Cameron in the *New York Review of Books* (May 13, 1976). To Professor Cameron's moral arguments I promised to return.

Cameron's task is hardly easy. He must begin at the beginning, with all the common objections to consequentialism and cultural relativism; and this for the reason that in most of the books under review "there is no serious consideration of the moral problems that may be raised by changes in the sexual mores of our society; still less is the notion ever canvassed of the possibility of there being in this field absolute interdictions. Very occasionally, perhaps, this is discussed, but with derision as modern chemists would talk about phlogiston." at most these books exude a loose and complacent consequentialism: anything goes as long as no one in the immediate vicinity is badly lacerated or driven to suicide.

One might expect that Cameron, having had to struggle to insert morality into the discussion at all, would be grateful for the two books which do make it central to their concern, *Binding with Briars: Sex and Sin in the Catholic Church* by Richard Ginder, and *From Machismo to Mutuality* by Eugene C. Bianchi and Rosemary Radford Ruether. That is not the case. Cameron wants, in some way, to defend "the old ethos set out in Deuteronomy," of which Catholicism has been the most public and militant representative. Alas, he finds that "if the books by Father Ginder, Mr. Bianchi, and Ms. Ruether are in any way symptomatic, the Catholic attitude, at any rate in North America, is beginning to shift."

Having read neither of these books, I cannot dispute Cameron's negative judgment on them. He devotes most of his energy to criticizing what is obviously the more serious volume, that by Bianchi and Ruether. His fundamental disagreements with them are two. First, they present the kind of unnuanced history of sexual relations—in brief, up from machismo—that reformers since the Enlightenment have always been given to. Second, they are guilty of a form of Gnosticism, the belief "that in a union of love between two people, personal, nonsexual relations are fundamental and that to these relations, between males and females, males and males, females and females, there may be added sexual relations, as relaxation, play, signs of affection, on occasion as means to procreation." This, says Cameron, sounds like what D. H. Lawrence called "sex in the head." It contrasts with the "Biblical tradition," in which it is the sexual relation between man and woman that constitutes the relation of marriage, and the love of friendship . . . is an added grace that belongs to the perfection of marriage but isn't constitutive of it."

How fairly Cameron represents the authors I cannot say; for purposes of argument let us presume he is accurate. His criticism then is very effective at the rhetorical level. Gnosticism is something we are always being warned against, by everyone from Eric Voegelin to Daniel Moynihan; and "sex in the head" is worse. "Sex in the head" is even redolent of the complaint Catholic lay people used to make against that clerical moralizing which had lost all touch with the lived reality of sexuality. Ruether and Bianchi stand accused of an "excessively spiritual attitude," while Cameron and the Judeo-Christian tradition end firmly on the side of a realistic earthiness.

Cameron may simply move too fast for me—or he may have moved too fast for his subject—but I have ever the slightest sense of being witness to a party trick. His argument is too easy on several counts, though perhaps that only reflects the constraints of a review-essay. To begin with, the "Biblical tradition" or "Jewish-Christian prescriptions" are not quite the unity he assumes. That the tradition and the prescriptions have evolved with cultural and economic conditions even a cursory re- second chapters of Deuteronomy makes clear. Second, if he faults Bianchi and Ruether for an unduly negative history of Christian attitudes toward sex, his own view can certainly be faulted in the other direction. No "serious person," he asserts, has ever maintained "that the *justification* for each sexual act is reproduction." Whether or not that is true —and I don't believe that it is—it hardly does justice to the shadow which long hung over all non-reproductive aspects of sexuality in Christianity. Cameron supports his view of the tradition by citing a passage in the Mishnah on the frequency of intercourse enjoined by the marital obligation. But here he has hyphenated "Judeo-Christian" a little too tightly. The Jewish tradition, like the Christian one, is patriarchal; but it is far less anti-sexual. One should note in the Mishnah not only the detailing of marital obligations incumbent upon those in different walks of life (intercourse daily for those free of labor, weekly for ass-drivers, monthly for camel drivers, etc.) but also that the husband had to obtain the wife's permission to switch to an occupation entailing less frequent intercourse.

(Continued on page 637)

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THE SCREEN

Damien in *The Omen* and Sondra in *The Obsession* come off as being pretty much the same character. Yet they ought to strike us as different in the end—the one an embodiment of evil, the other presumably innocent—and the fact that they don't is, in large measure, the reason each film fails with us. The difference between them is that Sondra is only being used for evil. She is its victim rather than, like Damien, its source. Fifteen years after the kidnap-murder of his wife and daughter, Michael (Cliff Robertson) is lured off on a trip to Rome by his best friend, who is also his business partner. But in Rome when Michael pays a visit to the church where he first met his wife, he there finds Sondra (Genevieve Bujold), who is the wife's very image, a perfect reincarnation of the woman whom Michael still grieves. By wooing and winning Sondra, Michael now tries to rid himself of the irrational guilt he has always felt for his wife's death.

In the end, though, Sondra turns out to be Michael's own daughter and the unwilling pawn of his partner, who was in fact behind the kidnapping years ago. The partner rescued the daughter from that aborted crime and is now trying to use her once again to get control of Michael's interest in their business. (Pretty devious, huh?) Because she has been raised in secret by the partner, Sondra is so dominated by him he can make her cooperate. But she does feel bad about it, as she shows by trying to commit suicide, and in the final scene she and Michael are reunited in an embrace.

This is a rather different closing from *The Omen*'s, where Damien turns to give the audience a knowing smile while attending his parents' funeral. A changeling whom Satan has foisted off on the rich and influential Thorn family, Damien accompanies his mother (Lee Remick) and father (Gregory Peck) on the latter's appointment as ambassador to England. Along the way Damien presides over the impaling of a priest, the decapitation of a journalist, the suicide of his first nanny, the aborting of his mother's second pregnancy, the murder of his mother by his second nanny and the near ravening of his father by dogs. Finally his father recognizes that there is something not quite right with the boy and accepts the necessity of doing away with him. But as he raises the ceremonial knife above the lad's heart, he has a moment's doubt, just enough to let the police burst in and shoot him.

Different as they are ultimately supposed to be, one reason Damien and Sondra don't affect us differently is that evil has a kind of impersonality in both these films. For all their aspirations to the bizarre and obsessive, neither film manages to give an impression of anything more than the sort of evil that is all too easy and familiar in movies. The mechanics of evil work well enough whenever there is a scene with any violence, but a sense of the presence of evil and the will to it are missing everywhere else. Since *The Omen* has more action sequences, I suppose it is, in a crude way, the more exciting film. The violence is full of kinky little turns. The suicidal nanny jumps from the roof eaves and, reaching the end of her rope, is jerked back through a window. A flagpole toppled uncertainly from a church tower begins to seem, plummeting toward the priest, as purposeful as a javelin in flight. The journalist's severed head lands eerily reflected in the plate glass that severed it. But nothing in the straight dramatic scenes in either film is done with equal panache. Except at the moment of death, characters are almost too bland and conventional to be told apart.

In the sort of atmosphere these films create personal evil is impossible, even though that is what gothic romances like these need to be truly horrifying. The core of the plot in each of these films is an act of evil of the most personal kind—filicide in *The Omen* and incest in *The Obsession*—yet the commission of such acts doesn't really seem to matter in either film. Though the producers of *The Omen* may have been nervous about showing us Gregory Peck ritually stabbing his son, and may have refrained from such an ending for that reason, I don't think the film makes us nervous about it. While we don't feel disappointed when the father hesitates to kill his son, I don't think we feel particularly relieved either. The whole scene makes such a muddle of the Abraham legend that far from having the reverse moral force from the Bible, as seems to be the intention, it has no moral force at all. And in *The Obsession,* when Michael and his daughter embrace at the end, the film seems to be sweeping aside as of no consequence the fact that they have slept together. Here the film's inversion of an ancient moral legend, the Oedipus story, matters even less than in *The Omen.*

In making an innocent embody the evil it proposes, a movie like *The Obsession* or *The Omen*—or *The Exorcist*—does not seem to enhance evil so much as nullify it. The children are always such nonentities, such ciphers. The reason that we can't believe in the presence of ancient, taboo evil in these films is that we can't believe in the presence of good in them. Both *The Omen* and *The Obsession* begin with a portrait of family life. It is the premise from which each film proceeds. But it is so sappy and cliché in each that the family's subsequent corruption by evil has no shock value. Who cares about the loss of a happiness that we didn't believe in in the first place?

We go to films like *The Omen* and *The Obsession* hoping to be shown something we have never seen before, hoping to have a bizarre and unprecedented experi-

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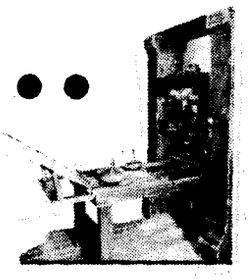
ence. But in truth, of course, none of these films has such powers. On the contrary, they try to succeed by preying upon fears we already have and bring into the theater with us. It is not finally abnormal psychology or occultism that would terrify us here, but conspiracy. It is the obsessive feeling we have all the time anyway that someone or something is plotting against us. The supernatural in these films is, at best, just a metaphor for the super-agencies in our own lives. This is another reason Damien and Sondra don't seem sufficiently different. They are too alike in being under the guardianship of their films' real villains, the nanny in *The Omen* and the business partner in *The Obsession*—people who don't let sentiment interfere with business, the operatives of the devil. But why should we spend three or four dollars at the movies to be frightened by people like that? We can have our fill of them in the newspapers everyday for just a fraction of the cost.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PRESS



Before getting on with the rest of the American century there are a few pieces of unfinished business to be cleared up. To wit: why did the Watergate burglars want to tap Larry O'Brien's phone? Why did Howard Hughes give $100,000 to Bebe Reboso for Richard Nixon? What were the terms of Hughes' arrangement with the Mafia in Las Vegas? Why did the CIA give Hughes a zillion-dollar contract for the Glomar Explorer? Was Deep Throat working for the CIA? Did the CIA have a case officer monitoring the Plumbers? Did someone blow up the plane carrying E. Howard Hunt's wife? Why were Hunt and Liddy planning to crack Hank Greenspun's safe in Las Vegas? Did the CIA put a tap on Judith Exner's phone in October, 1960? Why did Howard Hughes neglect to leave a will, when he had frequently declared a plan to leave his fortune to the Hughes Medical Institute? What is the CIA's relation to the Hughes empire now that Hughes is dead?

For that matter, why did the CIA deal with Hughes, a man whose loyalty it could not check? Why did the CIA allow Robert Maheu to tell Hughes that the CIA had asked Maheu to organize a Mafia operation to kill Castro? Who killed Maheu's instruments, Sam Giancana and John Roselli? Why did Lyndon Johnson believe that Castro killed John F. Kennedy? Why did the CIA neglect to investigate the presence of certain Cuban agents in the United States at the time of Kennedy's assassination? Why did James McCord ask Bernard Fensterwald to represent him during the Watergate hearings, when Fensterwald was well-known as the chairman of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations? Was Frank Sturgis telling the truth when he told UPI in July that Jack Ruby met Fidel Castro 10 weeks before Dallas?

Why are there so many questions of this sort? How are we going to answer them? What is their hidden meaning?

The literature on these matters is staggering: literally hundreds of books, hundreds of pages of citations in the *New York Times Index*, tens of thousands of pages of Congressional hearing transcripts, scores of green-and-gray-covered Senate and House committee reports, thousands of CIA and FBI documents, thousands of entries in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, thousands of unindexed articles in newspapers and magazines. It would take a team of trained researchers a year just to gather it all. It would take a decade to skim it. It would take a lifetime to absorb and see it whole. It might take forever to understand it.

But if you haven't got a lifetime to give to this undertaking, you can still get the flavor of its rich complexity by reading one book, J. Anthony Lukas's *Nightmare: The Underside of the Nixon Years*, and three recent articles: Howard Kohn's "Strange Bedfellows: The Hughes-Nixon-Lansky Connection" in *Rolling Stone* of May 20, Norman Mailer's "A Harlot High and Low: Reconnoitering Through the Secret Government" in *New York* of August 16, and Larry DuBois's and Laurence Gonzales's "The Puppet and the Puppetmasters" in the September *Playboy*. These authors have all mined the existing literature—Lukas and Kohn have strip-mined it—but they have returned to the surface with a very great many more questions than answers. Their only common conclusion is that there is more here than meets the eye.

But what? Their diagrams look like highway maps, in which every throughway and back country dirt track eventually meet. There are facts in plenty to support any conjecture. In the land of Kennedy-Nixon-Hughes-CIA-Cuba-Mafia you can get from anywhere to anywhere. Sometimes the route is broad and well-marked, sometimes circuitous. Our cartographer-authors have done heroic work, mapping the interconnections of power and money in Darkest America, but they are far from agreeing why there are so many unanswered questions and what is their hidden meaning.

One despairs of finding the answer, but one does not want to give up either. It comes down to being a personal matter. The fact that Hughes, Nixon, the Mafia, the CIA and all their various partners, allies, friends, agents and heirs want us to sigh and shrug and leave them alone spurs us on. In addition, the issues are important. If Howard Hughes gave money to Nixon for

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favorable federal agency rulings on business matters, and did things for the CIA in order to know things the CIA would intervene on his behalf to conceal, the details matter. After all, when you think of how much Hughes did for the CIA—billions of dollars in contracts, according to DuBois and Gonzales—it is only reasonable to presume the CIA did commensurate things for him. Their relationship was hardly based on sentiment. But what sort of things? Well, stop and consider what the CIA might be able to do in the Bahamas or Central America or any other place in which Hughes might take an interest, the phones it might tap, the informants it might ask questions, the timely commercial secrets it might reveal, the political opponents it could help to neutralize. Hughes's financial interests were large enough to matter to his country as well as to himself, making it easy for the CIA to explain to itself why it was acting on his behalf.

The relation of Hughes to the CIA is a question with an answer, just like the others with which I began, but I am not sure if that is reason enough for pursuing them. If our resources and time were infinite, yes, but they are not, and questions of this kind demand huge quantities of both for an uncertain return. The attempt to penetrate certain sorts of mysteries, and especially the sort which can be called conspiratorial, only deepen doubt and uncertainty. It is in the nature of the thing that you can never *know* you know the full truth. For every simple explanation there is a complex one, for every apparent motive the possibility of a hidden one, for every confident answer a skeptical question.

A couple of months ago I had an interview with John Ehrlichman about his recent novel, *The Company*, and Ehrlichman mentioned in passing that Nixon was so inept with anything mechanical that his secretary had to type out exact instructions and tape them to his "dictating machine" so he could use it. For a moment this seemed like a confirmation of a similar report in Carl Bernstein's and Bob Woodward's book, *The Final Days*, in which Nixon is described as having tried to open a new-fangled pill bottle with his teeth.

But then I thought, Hey wait a minute—"dictating machine"? Why that odd phrase? Did he mean a dictaphone—or a tape recorder? Is Ehrlichman trying to suggest an innocent explanation for the notorious 18-minute gap? Who told Woodward and Bernstein about the pill bottle? Are Nixon's secret supporters still subtly trying to cover his tracks? I felt the ground slide beneath my feet as I caught a trace smell of conspiracy. Suspiciousness to this degree is simply stupid, right? But on the other hand. . .

I am of two minds about the attempts of journalists to penetrate the lingering mystery of Watergate, which is not the old (now settled) question of what did Nixon know and when did he know it, but the more fundamental matter of who rules? This question can hardly be neglected in any country which likes to call itself free, but too many recent Watergate enquiries seem tainted by paranoia. They do not pursue a class of men in the spirit of sociology—the cotton interests, say, or the oil lobby—but a particular group of men in a spirit of almost medieval suspicion. The explanation these journalists seem to seek is a secret explanation, an exact and particular explanation, of the sort a novelist like Harold Robbins might provide for a politician's career. Senator X appears to be a man of the people, see, but in fact a cabal of defense contractors has proof he was a teenage pedophile and is backing his presidential campaign in return for a secret commitment to build a vast new fleet of one-man nuclear submarines. You know the sort of explanation I mean: the sort that when it is found, is *found*, and explains all.

Is it possible that Watergate, or the Nixon-Hughes-Lansky connection, or the Hughes-CIA axis, or even the Kennedy assassinations, have an explanation of that sort? One which might be written down on paper and locked in a safe? Is there something, in short, for the conspiracy sleuths to find? Not just ancillary detail but something large and fundamental which justifies the expense of the hunt? I know a woman who thinks Watergate was engineered by the CIA to remove Nixon from office because the CIA had discovered Nixon was a cohort if not a literal creature of the Mafia. Is it possible that something at least *like* that is hidden in the broad Pacific of primary Watergate documents?

In the clear light of morning this strikes me as crazy, right up here with the Oswald doubles, a surrender to the charm of melodrama when something simpler will suffice. Mailer is especially adept in the hunt for secret explanations. In his long article he suggests, among other things, that the CIA has been secretly investing funds over the years and has a "private" fortune which "could total by now anywhere from $25 billion to $100 billion," that the CIA used Hughes's Las Vegas operations for laundering secret funds, that certain elements in the Hughes empire had replaced Hughes the invalid loon with "HUGHES" a computer "not unrelated to OCTOPUS at Langley," that a 19th-century Mormon secret police called the Danites might have a cell in the CIA, that Hunt was a secret power in the CIA and continued to work for it after his "retirement," that McCord was an FBI plant in the CIA, that the Watergate break-in was an elaborate cover for the real object of the CIA, which was an impending change in the Federal Reserve Board's discount rate to be fed into the Fed's computer in the basement of the Watergate building! To get the full conspiratorial *basso profundo* of this conjecture you've got to read Mailer's article, which does not sound in context as crazy as this list, but which nevertheless has the rich, musty odor of work done solely with documents at midnight. In a lamplit room anything seems possible, perhaps, but in the clear light of

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morning Mailer's speculations—hedged with qualifications as they are— seem willful and perverse.

Howard Kohn, working with many of the same documents (and creating in the process one of *Mailer's* documents) does not speculate much about what his facts add up to. He simply marches them out in their hundreds, battalion on battalion, until the most skeptical mind must entertain the possibility there really is a connection. But it looms large and imprecise; I can't figure out quite what Kohn is saying. Mailer's vision of public life as plot on plot is elegant in its way, but so inventive as to seem almost playful. Kohn's vision is dark, unrelenting and bleak—a world of utter corruption, in which money and power are almost metaphysical principles.

It is too much. The documents can be made to speak in this way, but I can't be brought to believe what they say. Nothing so huge could be so well hidden, I think, and nothing so huge is necessary to explain what we know. Suspicion, self-interest, vindictiveness and a desire to serve the king are all the motive we need for who did what during Watergate. Hunt wanted to be important, Gray wanted to keep his job, Magruder was only doing his, Dean shifted with the prevailing wind, Mitchell had no principled objection to anything Liddy might propose, Rosemary Woods would do anything for Nixon, Nixon could never forgive an enemy or admit a fault or fight fairly when he saw a shot at an opponent's kidney, and so on. Purely human motives are sufficient to explain what happened, and the attempt to find a secret pattern is really an attempt to inflate a fundamentally prosaic event with the completeness of theater.

But then evening comes, and someone like Lukas in his calm, meticulous way reminds me of all the unanswered questions, and I begin to wonder just who was Deep Throat anyway, and if it was Bob Bennett what was he telling the CIA, and what was the CIA telling him? It is difficult not to believe that everyone connected with Watergate knows more than he has said, or to wonder how things might look if we really knew *everything*. Simple human motives might explain it all, but that does not mean they do.

But as I say, I'm of two minds on this matter, and it is morning now. I have read Lukas and Mailer and Kohn and DuBois and Gonzales and a good many other conspiracy sleuths as well, just as you probably have during the last couple of years. I have no large explanation of Watergate to offer in place of those which have been offered to me, but the questions I'd really like answered are of a different sort. I'd like to know, for example, what happened to democracy in Chile, how much of its destruction was our fault, why our friendship is so often poisoned, and why such questions receive so little attention, and the matter of Nixon-Hughes-CIA and Company so much? If there is a hidden meaning in the unanswered questions of Watergate, I suspect it is that we have grown parochial and self-absorbed, and have lost our appetite for the questions which might remind us there is a world beyond ourselves.

THOMAS POWERS

MODERN TRAGEDIES

MARK TAYLOR

The Easter Parade
RICHARD YATES
Delacorte, $7.95

I

At the beginning of an early short story about an infantry platoon going through basic training toward the close of the second World War, Richard Yates's narrator describes the platoon's drill instructor, Sergeant Reece, as "typical—almost a prototype —of the men who had drifted into the Regular Army in the thirties and stayed to form the cadres of the great wartime training centers. . . ." Out of context this sentence looks unremarkable, but I happened to read the story in which it occurs before I had read any of Yates's novels, and then when I did come to the novels, these few words about Sergeant Reece and his confreres kept returning to mind, unsought. It is the first verb, "drifted," I think, that has given the sentence such emblematic significance for me, because almost all of Yates's characters appear to have arrived wherever they have arrived by some species of drifting, of motiveless and ineffective participation in their own lives, of only token interference with the dread forces that shape and direct them. These people are not necessarily without announced purposes; some of them, like Frank Wheeler in *Revolutionary Road*, are veritable demons of self-improvement, at moments, anyway, and in their conscious intentions, but seen with the ironical and uncompromising vision that Yates shares with his readers, they seem somehow not to know the rules of the deadly game they play. And yet it is the only game and,

MARK TAYLOR *cotnributes a regular column to these pages.*

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paradoxically in the face of the characters' apparent drifting, its rules are unalterable.

The story about Sergeant Reece is "Jody Rolled the Bones"; it was reprinted in 1962 in a collection of Yates's stories, *Eleven Kinds of Loneliness*. For years that volume equaled nearly one third of Yates's production; there were also two novels, *Revolutionary Road* (1961) and *A Special Providence* (1969), plus a handful of other short stories not reprinted in book form. It appeared self-evident that Yates, who is now fifty, was not, and would not become, a prolific writer, and then, suddenly, two more novels in two years, *Disturbing the Peace* last fall and *The Easter Parade* now. The fact is all the more remarkable when one considers the kind of writer Yates is: careful, scrupulous, exact, faultless, every inch a purveyor of *le mot juste*, the antithesis of someone like, say, Thomas Wolfe. His pages must have been reworked many times, but it is impossible, seeing them in print, to imagine them in any other, earlier state.

And the creative outburst is more remarkable still when one considers the consuming desolation of Yates's world, perfectly uniform in its misery throughout the five books. Loneliness is part of it, what Yates has himself called "the spectre of personal isolation that haunts everyone." His characters need, as Forster wrote in *Howards End*, "only connect," and yet they almost never can. In one story a woman dutifully visits her husband, dying in a tuberculosis ward; she would rather be elsewhere, and he would rather have her elsewhere. After a few perfunctory words, he starts reading the magazines she has brought along. In another story, a class of endlessly forgiving school children ask simply that their teacher open herself to the love they have to give her; she can't. Profound human inadequacy is part of Yates's world, and so, more superficially, are alcohol and hospitals. *Disturbing the Peace*, which chronicles the descent of John Wilder through alcohol into madness, belongs to a literary sub-genre that treats of that particular form of self-destruction, books including Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, Exley's *A Fan's Notes*, and Berryman's *Recovery*. But even where excessive drinking is not Yates's nominal subject, it is still a pervasive condition of the lives of all his adult characters. And so are hospitals: public and private institutions, VA hospitals, tuberculosis wards, state hospitals for the insane and the neglected, Bellevue, Camarillo, Islip. They lurk at the end of every road, or even before the end. For all Yates's supreme mastery over his materials, it sometimes seems a wonder he can go on. It may be, however, that now he has arrived somewhere we had every reason to hope for and no reason to expect.

The Easter Parade tells the story of two sisters, Sarah and Emily Grimes, from childhood into early middle age. Actually, the book belongs to Emily much more than to her older sister; it is through her eyes that we watch the action unfold, it is her continuing disasters that we experience first-hand, it is her friends and lovers whom we come to know, and it is her final gesture in the book that suggests something very new in Yates's fiction. Emily is a bright and articulate girl; an English major at Barnard, and the darling of academic cocktail parties during her undergraduate years ("I could've sworn you were a grad student. You have a very—I don't know. You seem very sure of yourself," one boyfriend tells her), she goes on to a succession of never-quite-literary jobs like trade journals and ad agencies, which frustrate the talent she never wholly defines. For Emily, and Sarah, too, is a writer *manquée:* she starts numerous stories and books that come to nothing. (Indeed, it may well be part of Yates's achievement, here and elsewhere, to posit something about the reaction of the artist to the stresses of the modern world.) And, of course, Emily drifts along through the lives of men, and men through her life: the soldier who takes her virginity in Central Park; an impotent philosophy student; a bisexual sailor; a no longer luminescent poet who teaches in the Writers' Workshop at the State University of Iowa (where Yates himself has taught); a lawyer still in love with his estranged wife; these, and others, all of whom come wonderfully alive in a few or many pages.

But the direction of Emily's drifting is always, if often imperceptibly, downward. She gets older, less able to hold her liquor, less attractive to desirable men, less able to attend to the tedious details of her job. And then, when she seems about ready for the state hospital into which have drifted most of her family, an astonishing thing happens. She goes to visit her nephew Peter, the only one of Sarah's three boys to have made something of himself, and to Peter she admits the confusion of her whole life, and in so doing defines it to herself and offers some promise, in the book's last ambiguous pages, of finding personal renewal. It is an act of total surrender, which may signal an upward turn. This is astonishing, because only once before, by my calculation, has a fiction of Richard Yates's had anything approximating a happy ending; that was *A Special Providence*, whose ending is nevertheless equivocal: good for Robert Prentice, bad for his mother Alice.

The conclusion of *The Easter Parade* is astonishing, furthermore, because if it is happy, it is partly so in Christian terms. Peter is an Episcopalian priest, and the language in which the normally mildly-spoken Emily addresses him, however profane, has an implied frame of reference absent from her earlier discourse: "Jesus, Peter, I hope you do better than *that* in your sermons"; "Christ, what a cop-out"; "What's *that*, for God's sake?"; "Lord God—talk about fantasies coming to life." It is as if these words and the patience and love of her gentle nephew release something within Emily and allow a connection that none of her innumerable liaisons made possible. Since Emily's redemption is couched, in this way, in theological terms, it may be permissible to see her fundamental sin as sloth (is this the besetting sin of all Yates's drifters?), what people in the

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Middle Ages knew as *acedia*: the paralysis of the will, the inability to direct oneself toward the good.

The book's title refers to *an* Easter Parade in which Sarah Grimes, at 20, enjoyed probably the grandest moments of her life. Emily often recalls that time. The title also suggests, naturally, Irving Berlin's song, a verse of which is sung in an early Yates story, "The Best of Everything." It is to be wondered whether Yates has now recovered some sacred significance from this most secular of celebrations. This is one large question with which a reader will await his next work.

II

I am aware that my summary of *The Easter Parade* does an insufficient job of showing what is new and different about the novel—different not only from Yates's own earlier books but also from other tales of poor victimized girls who somehow manage to straighten themselves out at the end. It is a perceptible fact about Yates's fiction that any paraphrase or abridgment of it trivializes it and flattens it out almost beyond recognition; in outline, it does not leave a reader marveling over inventiveness and originality as, for instance, *Gravity's Rainbow* and *JR* do, even in outline. Why this should be so may be demonstrated by two very brave things Yates does in *Disturbing the Peace*.

Toward the end of that novel John Wilder and his girlfriend Pamela have gone to Hollywood to try to peddle the story of Wilder's life—his business success, extreme drunkenness, family problems, breakdown, confinement in Bellevue, partial recovery, release, still uncertain future—to the men who make movies. They have some letters of introduction, and at first things go well: contacts are made, a production company is formed, and a preliminary conference of Wilder, Pamela, the director Munchin, and a writer, Jack Haines, gets under way. Haines begins by describing the character he is envisioning for the film: "He's unhappily married and he's got kids he can't relate to and he feels trapped. He's solidly middle class. I don't know what he does for a living, but let's say it's something well paid and essentially meaningless, like advertising. When he gets out of Bellevue he's scared and lost but he doesn't know where to turn." Haines goes on a while longer in this vein, and what he is doing, of course, is offering an abstract but perfectly accurate sketch of John Wilder as he has developed to this point, about fifty pages from the end of the book. But then Munchin interrupts him: "I can see you've given this a lot of thought, but I can't help feeling there's a quality of cliché about everything you've said so far. Unhappy advertising man, gray flannel suit and all that." This is daring; Yates is throwing down the gauntlet. He is inviting the reader to see the proximity of his character to cliché, and yet implicitly insisting that he nevertheless transcends any cliché. It is the sort of thing, as novelists say, that other novelists can appreciate.

Such an invitation, however, entails the obvious and considerable risk of getting one hoist by his own petard; an author shouldn't perhaps, alert critics to those spots in his work that bear even a specious semblance of weakness. Still, Yates gets away with it, and partly because it is their hovering nearness to cliché that enables many great fictional creations to become enduring cultural types. Reduce books to plot outlines, deny characters the full context they inhabit, above all, take away the author's *language*, and how much literature becomes soap opera or grotesquerie; the classic exhibit here is Tolstoy's rendition of *King Lear*. It is easy to make even the greatest literature sound banal and silly. Jack Haines's summary of Wilder—a cliché in the way that almost anyone put in five or six sentences becomes a cliché—is in a sense a brief for the integrity of a text, an arguing of the inviolable association of plot and characters. Yates has justified the abiding affection for an early short story, "A Really Good Jazz Piano," that led to his letting it represent him in a recent anthology (*Writer's Choice*, ed. Rust

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Hills, New York: David McKay, 1974): "To use a standard writers' word whose elusive meaning often seems clear only to editors and critics, I think [the story] 'works.' It seems to grow out of its characters rather than being imposed on them; the scenes and narrative sections fit into each other without much transitional fooling around; the pace may not be fast but does seem to gather momentum at just about the necessary speed."

Most of Yates's fiction "works" for exactly these reasons, especially the first: the incidents that constitute the plot seem always to grow out of the characters and never to be arbitrary. Thus, in *Disturbing the Peace* Haines projects the future of the movie character: "He systematically destroys everything that's still bright and promising in his life, including the girl's love, and he sinks into a depression so deep as to be irrevocable. He winds up in an asylum that makes Bellevue look like nothing." This is the other brave thing Yates does, for the forecast corresponds precisely to the way the rest of Wilder's life will unfold. Yates can tell us in advance because he knows that the character he has drawn can behave no other way, and we know it, too. It is in the inevitability with which his characters' lives proceed that Yates shows that tragic art is still possible.

A recent essay by Gore Vidal in the *New York Review of Books* got a friend and me to talking about some of the limitations of contemporary fiction. Generally agreeing with Vidal's severe critique of several of our most prominent writers, my friend said that the problem with our fiction—he meant American novels since World War II—was its dearth of characters who were convincing and, more, memorable as characters, who led the reader to be genuinely concerned with them as with complicated, sympathetic, real, and yet individualized human beings. We tried to name exceptions to this generalization, characters who inspired the happy fallacy of having one regard them as people independent of the books where they live (as one can regard Jake Barnes and Jay Gatsby), and didn't get very far: Holden Caulfield, Sebastian Dangerfield, a few of Bellow's creations. This list can surely be extended, though I doubt very far, but it will imperatively include a dozen or more characters in the work of Richard Yates, not only his protagonists but also slighter figures like John Givings in *Revolutionary Road* and Charlie and Dr. Spivack in *Disturbing the Peace*. There is no more certain sign of Yates's importance among our writers.

BOOKS

THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY

RICHARD C. HOTTELET

Diplomacy for a Crowded World

GEORGE W. BALL

Atlantic—Little, Brown, $12.95

George Ball is a big man, a prophet with honor. As Under-Secretary of State, he saw sooner than anyone in the top ranks of government the disaster built into the Vietnam commitment. Later, he resigned as U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations because, as he said, he could not imagine a more urgent necessity than to work against Richard Nixon's election to the presidency.

Few are as well qualified to present their views on the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. He does so robustly—and, for the most part, right on target. But there's the rub. He has a target: Henry Kissinger and the Nixon-Kissinger style. He beats it to a pulp . . . shuttle and Lone Ranger diplomacy, circus summitry, Nixon shocks to Europe and Japan, secrecy, linkage—the lot. Sympathizers will cheer and the many good points he makes will speak for themselves but George Ball's admirers may feel that he lapses into overkill when he should have stayed with judicious analysis. Especially, since he arrives at substantive conclusions which are not all that strikingly different from Kissinger's own—except for the Middle East, and possibly detente.

One might wish that Ball's colleagues in banking and business would take to heart his reduction of detente to a conceptual shambles. He starts—not at all reluctant to give credit where credit is due—with the Kissinger concept of the Soviet Union as a revolutionary power, in the sense that the Kremlin does not accept the values of the world around it but pursues its own goals with whatever means come to hand. This does not rule out prudence, restraint and gestures of amiability but it does exclude the kind of agreement the United States may reach with even fractious friends like France, Greece or Turkey. Ball scoffs at the notion that the Soviet Union may be tied down by gossamer strands of self-interest such as those elaborated in the first Nixon-Brezhnev summit. He points out that the Soviets have used the Basic Principles of Relations signed in Moscow in May 1972 to gain precisely that selfish advantage which the Principles were meant to overcome—in Vietnam, the Middle East, Africa and Central Europe. Moscow and the Soviet bloc have collected enormous western credits—$40 billion is the latest estimate—and given nothing of consequence in the way of political

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and economic cooperation or of arms control, let alone arms reduction. Such concessions as the Russian leaders have made, says Ball, are those they would have made tactically in any case as in SALT, under the pressure of their economic inadequacy; it is nonsense to believe that they can be cajoled or bribed into giving up their first principles and joining in the liquidation of their own system.

Having said all this, colorfully and emphatically, Ball strays off into a non sequitur. He reproaches Kissinger for not "enlisting Soviet support" in trying to find peace in the Middle East but then comes back, practically on the next page, to ask, "why should we collaborate to give the Soviet Union world recognition as a superpower, so long as it perversely frustrates every sensible initiative to deal with world problems that are as dangerous to the Soviet Union as to ourselves?" What would make Moscow less perverse and how long would it take? Ball hazards no guess about the time span but suggests four central considerations that should guide U.S. policy. They sound rather familiar and would draw no objection from the Ford-Kissinger combination. First, keep up our military guard and encourage our allies to make NATO strong. Second, instead of talking about detente, put it to the test. No food or credits unless Moscow stops fiddling with "wars of national liberation." Third, localize local conflicts and do not automatically treat each one as a proxy skirmish with Moscow. Fourth, initiate a period of "polite neglect" in place of obsessive attention to the Soviet Union.

Well, now. NATO's troubles go back long before Kissinger and if the notion of detente, which compounded them, was carried to absurd and self-serving extremes by the Nixon administration, it was a U.S. invention. It had flowered in the 1950s and '60s in Britain, France and Germany, to name only three of the allies. In fact, detente reflects the inherent and wholesome urge of a democratic society to have its leaders "go more than halfway" to ensure peace and of those leaders to have themselves handsomely confirmed in office by doing so successfully. Individuals may see clearly the need for unflagging vigilance but free societies seem to respond only to disappointment—sometimes shockingly late.

As for cutting off food shipments and industrial capital to the Soviet Union—this would be possible only in a situation of clear urgency, as President Ford found out when he walked into a political buzz saw with his brief food embargo. And, in a time of recession and slow recovery, no one has yet even seriously proposed canceling the credits which make jobs.

> *Today sober historians are often outshouted by revisionists who twist events like pretzels to fit them into the Marxist mold, or systematically strip the American experience of any glory or heroism. Unquestionably stimulated by the Vietnam ordeal, such antipatriotism is part of the nihilism that mars the present age—nihilism with its emphasis on the antihero. It is manifest in our current literature, in the glorification of violence and the outlaw, in the taste for black humor and erotic books and films. It confuses exhibitionism with liberty and, in the current state of taste and literature, substitutes a puerile cynicism for loyalty to the community or any actions beyond self-interest.*
>
> —Diplomacy for a Crowded World

A vote of thanks, incidentally, for expert treatment of what might in times past have been considered "technical" elements of diplomacy, but which have taken on the proportion of major political issues. The Third World's clamor for a global redistribution of wealth in a New International Economic Order must be dealt with. The Population/Food dilemma is likely to be on the priority of every future Secretary of State. Multinational Corporations, nuclear proliferation, international terrorism and other headaches entered the diplomatic lexicon in the 1970s. They will be around for a while and will not be ignored.

There is much astringent common sense in this book, although in the post-Watergate period some of the wisdom is fairly conventional. Congress must indeed be a partner in foreign policy, but one might have expected from a man who knows how the machinery of diplomacy works some stronger admonition against Congress seeing itself as the senior partner. Executive aggrandizement is a danger, however the alternative to a presidential foreign policy is not congressional policy but none at all.

Ball has great fun, in a serious way, ringing the changes on the moral imperative in America's view of the world and smiting Realpolitik. But before he ties himself in knots in an effort to define "what is missing . . . a moral theme to give coherence to what we as a nation are trying to do," the Old Pro turns to criticizing the Kissinger policy for no longer reflecting "the evolving realities." And he presents as a worthy objective to "sustain the present balance of power, sphere of influence system and thus preserve an essential equilibrium."

If that doesn't sound like the Professor himself.

Contemplative Christianity

AELRED GRAHAM
Seabury, $6.95

MICHAEL ZEIK

Whenever I read a book these days by a western author writing about eastern spirituality, or comparing Christianity with the eastern religions, I look first of all to see if he has been "snowed." Does he compare the worst moments of the history, the baser elements of the culture of Christendom, with the high points exclusively, of Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.? The opposite bias, of course, had been operative, until this decade, for two and a half centuries. But looking down one's long, white, aristocratic nose at the lesser breeds of mankind is no longer

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even socially, let alone academically, respectable. It is now the former which is fashionable, and, for that reason, more corrosive of the truth.

Dom Aelred Graham, Benedictine monk, scholar, presently leading a contemplative life at Ampleforth Abbey in England, does, much of the time, keep his balance and his sense of reality in this book—which is, for all practical purposes, a dialogue with eastern spirituality.

Dom Aelred believes, as I do, that it is as "Catholic" for us to be open to the values of Buddhism in 1976, as it was for Thomas Aquinas to be open to the values of that pagan, Aristotle, in 1276. We ought never indulge a 'protestant' mind-set against the great insights, spiritual seeds, broadcast by the lavish hand of God, as He scattered logos over the earth.

Indeed, we must not only be open, we must be ready to *emulate* whatever in the eastern spiritual tradition is worth emulating. Agreed. I am thinking of the not-insignificant number of western students, Christian and Jewish, who have left their respective faiths to embrace the Buddhist discipline—and I mean *discipline!* Hours of daily meditation and silence; frequently, manual labor; and (in 1976!) chastity. While all our sermons and newly sophisticated theologies are fingers pointing to God, they are not God. Even discounting for the faddism, there is some truth to the idea that this generation is after the raw experience of God. There has been, after all, a nuclear bomb, a revolution in sex and morals, and people are in a hurry. Would that the contemplative orders would offer our students the appropriate retreats. And let the rigor be. We Catholic intellectuals have been so hypocritical on this point! After insisting on the dignity of the body, and the intimacy (if not unity) of the body-soul relationship, we drop the practices of fasting, penance, etc., and still expect to have 'human' religious experiences. We have half-Easters because we have half-Lents. Anyone who expects otherwise has neither read Confucius, understood Buddha's Eightfold Way, nor really appreciated the meaning of Incarnation. More and more we are making Christianity into an "intellectual experience." (Of *course* the main point is "love." But do we think it will not take love to get the West to eat less meat in a global 'triage' situation?) But this is me, and not Graham.

To return to the question of balance, the author is aware of the limitations of the East, as he certainly is of those of the West. He quotes Ananda Coomaraswamy to the effect that Mahayana Buddhists must be forewarned that their scriptures deal not with history but with spiritual processes in the heart of man, and "that matters of historical fact are without religious significance."

Here, says Graham, no doubt thinking of the world of Calcutta, "we are taken too far in the non-historical direction. What actually happens in the world of space and time can be of immense significance, if it is a means whereby men are delivered from selfishness and attain a state of being beyond the temporal order." Yet he agrees (as does St. Paul) with Coomaraswamy to this extent: the death and resurrection of Christ, *besides* being historic facts, are also intended to be a "process forever unfolded in the heart of man."

At this point, however, the balance tilts. "Nevertheless," writes Graham, "though Western Christianity still has something to give to the East, it has probably *more* to gain from the encounter." (Italics, my own.) More than that, he accepts uncritically the dubious thesis of Edgar Bruns that Mahayana has *already* infiltrated Christianity through the fourth Gospel (edited in Alexandria, where Buddhist influence was supposedly operative). In this, he overlooks the more plausible theory of the noted scholar Edward Conze, that it was Christianity which

REVIEWERS

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appears to have influenced the development of Mahayana Buddhism!

Difficult questions of historical research aside, I have been to Japan, as has Dom Aelred. I have spoken to Zen monks, as has he. They have, it seems to me, a less rosy view of the condition of Buddhism, and what the West might gain from them, than he. In fact it was their brutal honesty on the subject that endeared them to me. Frankly, many of the monks I spoke to said that real Buddhism was virtually 'finished' in Japan. (I might add the story related to me by one of my Japanese students in her recent term paper. "Americans seemed so shocked when I answered their questions honestly about religion in Japan, that now I lie. I tell them that I and my friends are Buddhist. This makes them happy. But we have no religion. Just many customs.")

The culmination of Graham's attitude is found in his approving quote of B.H. Streeter to the effect that "to isolate divine sonship to Jesus Christ"—and not, presumably, to extend the privilege to Buddha, Confucius, Yajnavalkya, and Gandhi—defeats "the attempt to produce a satisfactory doctrine of the Incarnation."

Here I must part with the author —unless he refers to the "sonship" that is open to every human being ever born. And Christianity has never been timid or niggardly about this. But as for the double-Christ theory, even the Buddhists say "the world would explode if it contained more than one Buddha."

The author may be guilty of nothing more than ambiguity here, I don't know. Or he may believe in the equal divinity of Jesus, Buddha, et al., and feel he is advancing Christianity. To me, however, when it has been thus far 'advanced' it is not recognizable as Christianity. I love and respect Buddhism; but there is a difference between "openness" and "Catholicity" on the one hand, and formlessness and syncretism on the other. *"Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott helff mir. Amen."*

But when all is said and done, we have here a thoughtful book by a probing mind on a difficult subject, and Dom Aelred enables his readers even to *disagree* with him more literately than they would otherwise have been able. He should be read.

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Steinfels (Cont.)

Can one find a representative statement, or even any statement, quite like that in the Christian literature?

The "Biblical tradition" is neither so static nor so monolithic as Cameron implies, but what his representation of it lacks most is the recognition that it was intimately bound up with the preeminence of the reproductive and economic functions of the family. In several ways the sexual code of Deuteronomy attempts to protect the vulnerable; but fertility and the protection of "possessions," including women and offspring, are still the controlling concerns of its world. Though this patriarchal world evolved and the tradition evolved with it, only in recent times have the links between sex and reproduction, marriage and economic accumulation been loosened. I believe that is a watershed.

History does move on; things do change. Perhaps not as rapidly or as totally as the latest book always proclaims, but they do nonetheless. And one can reasonably ask whether a sexual union in which the love of friendship may or may not be present any longer makes sense, or even meets other Christian standards. Is the alternative "sex in the head"? I don't know. But it seems mistaken to me that we should approach the question as though nothing but fashion had shaken the ground upon which the "Biblical tradition" was built.

At this point introduce Exhibit B. Exhibit B is a review written by Dennis O'Brien in the June 4 *Commonweal.* O'Brien's review, like Cameron's, is intelligent and witty. Like Cameron's, it disposes of Father Ginder's *Binding with Briars.* Like Cameron's, it shows no enthusiasm for the bright ribbons of liberation, and is more concerned with locating reasonable rules and limitations than in abolishing them. Yet unlike Cameron's, it seems much less assured of traditional answers and much more favorable to those seeking new ones. Caught reading *Philosophy & Sex* in an airplane, O'Brien is advised by grey-haired lady, "You'll find more instruction in the Bible!" He admits to himself "that the Bible shows some interest in sex even if"—and here he departs from Cameron—"its instruction is not always clear."

From the volume *Philosophy & Sex* O'Brien extracts the theme of sex as language, as communicative gesture. Language can be perverse or truncated or egoistic or confused—or reciprocal and communicative. And "body language" may involve a high degree of givenness rather than, as with spoken tongues, so much that is conventional. In this light, "what is needed is an extended phenomenology of sexual acts."

This approach strikes me as extremely promising. But two things can be remarked about it from the start. First, it is "sex in the head" with a vengeance. For if sexual gestures are communicating something, we will have to attend to what they are communicating, and this, I suspect, may be at least as much "in the head" as in the loins. One may reply, with Archibald Macleish, that the poem of sex should not mean but be. Yet Macleish, taken literally, is wrong: a poem should mean *and* be.

And second, while the "body language" approach may lead to important distinctions between classes of sexual acts, identifying some as better or more profound and others as entirely unworthy, it seems doubtful that we would end with the pattern of absolute prohibitions we now have. Language is too flexible and variable for that: we use it to bind ourselves with the most profound pledges and we misuse it when we lie or slander; but in between there is small talk, banter, singing in the shower, and a thousand other legitimate uses of language. Wherever we go with such an approach to sexual morality, it won't be back to the familiar place where we started.

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O'Brien is aware of these limitations and of our uncertainty in general. "I strongly suspect that much more needs to be done before we are clearer on the place and character of sexuality in human life." I don't know whether Cameron agrees, or even whether he wants us to become clearer about sex.

The fact is that Cameron does not explicitly endorse the "Biblical tradition" in his article. He merely sets it in a framework which could be called the decline from the Old to the New. The Old involves a deep sense of the uncanny power of sexuality, and hence the generation of myths, taboos, dread, and guilt. The New involves a cheerful confidence in technique, and hence the reduction of sex to the tractable, the domestic, the recreational, and ultimately the trivial. Against such a drift Cameron's essay can be taken as a valuable warning.

More and more, however, I sense a danger in this position, the danger of conservative nostalgia. Perhaps the key sentences in Cameron's article are found in his last paragraph: "If everything is interesting and nothing is grave, satire cannot bite and tragedy gives way to the social illness of maladjustment. For many, human life under such conditions would lose its music." Those lines are imposing at first, a ringing declaration. Upon second reading, they become distressing. For *whom* will life lose its music? Professors of literature? We do not make or maintain social arrangements in order to foster satire or preserve tragedy. Tragedy we will probably have aplenty in any case, though I grant the danger of an ethic that would blind us to its reality when it occurred. That must be resisted because it would reduce humanity in a way more drastic than is expressed in the loss of "music."

Yet the real problem with this passage, and with Cameron's framework generally, is the implication that sex was "grave" in the Old era of taboo and guilt while it has become trivial and routine in the New era of the "interesting" and the experimental. I doubt that such a case can be sustained. It does not appear evident that taboos, dread, and guilt kept either medieval peasants or the middle-class of a few years ago from the routinization and trivialization of sex. A recent article in the *New York Times Magazine* reported on "over-40 singles." "I'm methodical," said one of them, named Andy. "I married essentially to get it out of the way. I was spending too much time thinking about girls, dating. I like home cooking. And this girl had simply fabulous legs. . . . We had sex almost every night I was home. I have trouble falling asleep without sex." Andy was shocked when his wife, perhaps unaware that sexual union even without friendship was constitutive of Judeo-Christian marriage, demanded a divorce. After all, he had never been unfaithful. Andy was not the product of sexual liberation.

One could multiply examples. To defend the "Biblical tradition" on Lawrentian grounds of mystery, darkness, and dread won't work, no more than the romantic justification of established Christianity thrown up by Chateaubriand and other post-revolutionary conservatives. There is little to be gained by romanticizing the past, and as for the present it deserves neither to be extolled nor denigrated. Cameron admits that Bianchi and Ruether are not wide-eyed about sexual liberation "in any of the popular contemporary senses." But this is immediately undercut with: "They view marriage in the way now fashionable in much Catholic writing: ideally it is a rather jolly and affectionate relationship of equal comrades who recognize each other as persons in their own right." Now that would not be an unattractive image but for "rather jolly," a sixpenny sneer conjuring up Saint Nick and children's birthday parties. Does the Old really have this right to be so superior?

In regard to sexual mores we are not anchored as once we were. There is good reason for that fact. We need not founder, we need not drift. There are *some* stars to steer by, and we may discover more. We do well to ward off the worst and sillier bouts of seasickness. But there is no use pretending that we are not at sea.

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Abigail McCarthy (Cont.)

There is the argument, for example, which was advanced by one Carter spokesman, that potential vice president, Walter F. Mondale, took much the same stand vis à vis abortion as did Carter, and that he had no trouble getting reelected and elected (he was originally appointed) in Minnesota where one-quarter of the population is Catholic. The assumption is that the Catholics in Minnesota usually vote Democratic—that they are a part of the normal Democratic constituency there. This is not necessarily true. Minnesota's great archbishop, John Ireland, contended until his death with the Eastern bishops who sought to hold Catholic immigrants on the Eastern seaboard in order to build a political force. He was a Republican and thought that one way for the arriving Catholic immigrants to become more thoroughly integrated into the American scene was to join the Republican party. During the Roosevelt years thousands of German Catholics in Minnesota who had not previously become Republicans, did so. Minnesota Catholics not only do not vote Democratic; they do not even vote Catholic. In the election of 1960 John F. Kennedy won in Minnesota by a very scant majority at the same time that Hubert Humphrey was reclaiming his senate seat with a landslide. There was no significant Catholic shift from Eisenhower. The argument, therefore, from the Mondale experience can be discounted.

The Reverend Robert Drinan, when queried, said that he felt that the majority of Catholics would be comfortable with Carter's religious style. It was a basic kind of spirituality, he thought, with which Catholics could be comfortable. (The charismatic movement among Catholics has shown that we, too, thirst for a very personal religious experience.) But it was also the Reverend Robert Drinan who said in another connection, "Christians retreat into the simplicity of the evangelicals and the pentecostals rather than

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move forward into the complexity of the moral dilemmas of the marketplace, the educational scene or the government." And again, "The churches of America have always tended to acquiesce in a status of being purely personal, sectarian ways of life. For more than a century the churches and most people in America have assumed that the political life of the nation can survive on the basis of those moral principles which are brought to public life by the elected and appointed officials of the nation." Studies have shown that if Catholic voters can be characterized in any way, it is that they tend to be more aware of the connection between the teaching of the gospel and its application to social problems than the members of many other churches. So far Governor Carter has not established this connection in his statements of his plans; he has simply assured us of his own personal religious conviction.

I would myself like to discount the more subtle uneasiness expressed in the distrustful statements of such ethnic symbolic figures as Jimmy Breslin and Geno Baroni, but I am not sure that I can. Breslin said provocatively, you remember, that he didn't trust anyone south of New Jersey "because of what they did to Al Smith in Georgia." And Baroni said that he couldn't quite put his finger on his feeling about Carter but that he had met with him several times and "didn't feel quite comfortable in the room with him." Aside from the fact that I know people who aren't quite comfortable in the room with Geno Baroni, I think we must acknowledge that these statements, although they seem statements of prejudice, evince an indefinable difficulty that may not quite melt away.

In the meantime what of the Catholics and Ford? The political strategy of the pro-life people may not have millions in its legions, but it does have impassioned and totally focused adherence. We now know how useful this motivation was to Senator Dole, President Ford's running mate, in his last state-wide election in Kansas, a state not known for a large Catholic population. The President has the advantage—with which he is decidely uneasy, it is true—of the so-called abortion plank in the Republican platform which calls for the amendment to the Constitution. The President has said that he believes that the people of the whole country should be allowed to vote on the issue. Even Catholics who do not support the amendment must feel that this is more fair than the approach of the Democratic platform which summoned opposition to the amendment effort—surely a Constitutional right of those who seek it. If there is one thing which can unite Catholic voters *as Catholics*, it is any display, or appearance of, anti-Catholicism.

NOTE: After a meeting with Jimmy Carter, which took place after this column was written, Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that although Mr. Carter did not himself support such an amendment, he had "indicated he would not oppose an effort to obtain a constitutional amendment" to overturn the Supreme Court decision on abortion. Mr. Carter subsequently explained that he opposed his party's platform on this point because it "insinuates that Catholics, Protestants, Jews or private citizens don't have a right to seek such an amendment." —THE EDITORS

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 579)

finances were by Drs. McCourt and McCready, respectively. Alford devotes substantial space in his review to these two chapters, but attributes them to me. I don't think that's fair.

(REV.) ANDREW M. GREELEY
Director, Center for the
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